Table of Contents

1. Allegiances {Edited}
2. Prologue {Edited}
3. Chapter One {Edited}
4. Chapter Two {Edited}
5. Chapter Three {Edited}
6. Chapter Four {Edited}
7. Chapter Five {Edited}
8. Chapter Six {Edited}
9. Chapter Seven {Inserted}
10. Chapter Eight {Edited}
11. Chapter Nine {Edited}
12. Chapter Ten {Inserted}
13. Chapter Eleven {Edited}
14. Chapter Twelve {Edited}
15. Chapter Thirteen {Inserted}
16. Chapter Fourteen {Edited}
17. Chapter Fifteen {Edited}
18. Chapter Sixteen {Edited}
19. Chapter Seventeen {Edited}
20. Chapter Eighteen {Inserted}
21. Chapter Nineteen {Inserted}
22. Chapter Twenty {Edited}
23. Chapter Twenty One {Edited}
24. Chapter Twenty Two {Edited}
25. Chapter Twenty Three {Edited}
26. Chapter Twenty Four {Edited}
27. Chapter Twenty Five {Edited}
28. Chapter Twenty Six {Edited}
29. Epilogue {Edited}
30. Copyright

Allegiances {Edited}

ICECLAN

Leader
(*In charge of the Clan and the territory they live in*)
Blizzardstar- A large, burly white tom with icy blue eyes.

Deputy
(*Helps the leader with decisions; organizes the patrols and helps to keep the Clan busy*)
Wildflight- a beautiful, skinny brown she-cat with green eyes.

Medicine Cat
(*Heals the clan and interprets the will of StarClan*)
Tinypool- a white and gray spotted she-cat with blue eyes.

Warriors
(*Cats who protect and defend the clan; in charge of hunting and patrolling the territory*)
Pearlfang- a thick muscled off-white she-cat with mesmerizing yellow eyes.

Quickwater- a dark gray tabby she-cat with dark blue eyes.
(Apprentice: Webpaw)

Hawkslash- a brown tabby tom with yellow eyes.

Redfern- a fluffy orange she-cat with green eyes.

Sootsplash- a white tom with splotches of black, has green eyes.

Aspenclaw- a very powerful brown and white tom with green eyes.
(Apprentice: Weaselpaw)

Goldensky- a pretty golden brown she-cat with amber eyes.

Elkleap- a powerful brown and black tom with yellow eyes.

Meadowshine- an elegant tortoiseshell she-cat with blue eyes.
(Apprentice: Stormpaw)

Softgaze- a fluffy, cream she-cat with green eyes.
(Apprentice: Brokenpaw)

Apprentices
(*Cats older than 6 moons; training to become warriors*)
Webpaw- a white and silver striped tom with blue eyes.

Weaselpaw- an all brown tom with yellow eyes.

Stormpaw- a dark gray tom with blue eyes.

Brokenpaw- a brown and black spotted she-cat with green eyes.

Queens
(*She-cats expecting or nursing kits*)
Quietstorm- a white and black splotched she-cat with blue eyes.
(Kits: Applekit and Sweetkit)

Elders
(*Retired warriors; too old or frail to hunt and fight*)
Reedfur- a brown tabby tom with green eyes.

Timberstrike- a dark brown tom with green eyes.

BREEZECLAN

Leader
(*In charge of the Clan and the territory they live in)*
Oakstar- a brown and white tabby tom with green eyes.

Deputy
(*Helps the leader with decisions; organizes the patrols and helps to keep the Clan busy)*
Hailstorm- a black and silver tom with blue eyes.

Medicine Cat
(*Heals the clan and interprets the will of StarClan)*
Dewdrop- an elegant silver she-cat with blue eyes.

Warriors
(*Cats who protect and defend the clan; in charge of hunting and patrolling the territory)*
Rockclaw- a brown tom with yellow eyes.

Snakefang- a black and white mottled tom with green eyes.

Willowleaf- a long furred cream she-cat with green eyes.
(Apprentice: Vinepaw)

Nightvolt- a gray tabby tom with yellow eyes.

Foxstreak- an orange tabby she-cat with green eyes.

Ashcloud- a gray tom with red eyes.

Coldwind- a white tom with blue eyes.

Spottedrose- a very beautiful calico she-cat with blue eyes.
(Apprentice: Bearpaw)

Apprentices
(*Cats older than 6 moons; training to become warriors)*
Vinepaw- a gray tabby tom with green eyes.

Bearpaw- a thick muscled brown tom with yellow eyes.

Elders
(*Retired warriors; too old or frail to hunt and fight)*
Dappledleaf- a tiny tortoiseshell she-cat with green eyes.

Prologue {Edited}

Thick clouds covered the chilly night sky, blanketing the dense forest in suffocating darkness. The air was thick with the scent of blood and dead leaves, an omen in itself to any soul that lingered. All was silent except for two cats; a lithe white tom sat huddled next to a brown tabby, their heads bent in discussion.

"You have only been leader for six moons, I worry what danger this prophecy brings for you, Blizzardflash." the brown tabby muttered darkly. His eyes cast around the shadows on the earthen floor, wary of any prying ears.

"BlizzardSTAR," the white tom corrected him hotly, "just because you were leader before me doesn't give you the right to call me that anymore." The white tom's fur fluffed up in agitation. He knew he should have at least earned his name as leader that previous night.

The brown tabby chuckled, his shoulders bobbing with each breath. "You are still cocky from your battle with Breezeclan. Do not forget that lives were lost on this night." he meowed sternly.

"Just a medicine cat, nothing crucial." Blizzardstar shrugged it off. Losing lives in the name of battle was a common occurrence in these lands; even if it was just a healer. The brown tabby growled, growing frustrated.

"You need to stop acting so arrogant! This life of battle and blood shed is not how we are meant to be." the tom hissed. He unsheathed his claws to take a slash at Blizzardstar, but thought better of it.

"How do you expect to keep living in this forest if you all kill each other first? You need to realize that your lives are better off when you aren't fighting." he meowed, his temper fading.

"But we've always battled for our honor, clearly that is what's right." Blizzardstar reasoned, feeling confused at what his acquaintance was telling him. To believe that the lives of his kin had been

carelessly wasted in battle was a cruel thought. His mother had died when he was still a tiny kit, his father had been taken in a viscous border skirmish, and his beloved sister had been killed in a raid on the BreezeClan camp.

Truly, both clans had been riddled with loss almost their entire existence. It was hard to imagine the forest without the sweet scent of blood and battle cries drifting on the breeze. Blizzardstar opened his mouth to say something to his companion; but suddenly, a far off look entered the brown tabby's eyes. It was as if he was staring off into a distant future. "Times are changing... you must choose the right path if you are to survive." the tom mewed softly.

Blizzardstar bristled in fright, his eyes growing wide. "What do you mean Mudstar? I don't understand!"

"Before there is peace, an ancient oak will herald a coming storm. May bonds be formed for the better, lest the forest be forever drowned in darkness." Mudstar recited slowly, his eyes burning with wisdom as he continued to stare into the murky distance.

Blizzardstar gasped, feeling like his pelt was drenched with icy cold water. "Will this mean destruction for Iceclan?" he asked, his voice shaking with fright.

"You need to travel to the scene of the battle. Hidden among the darkness is a bright, shining light. You must not let it be snuffed out." Mudstar meowed mysteriously.

Blizzardstar could feel dozens of questions bubbling on the tip of his tongue. But slowly, Mudstar was starting to fade from his vision. His dream was coming to an end and a thick fog was starting to engulf his white pelt. "Just remember, when the time comes you need to choose the right path!" Mudstar meowed desperately as the fog grew thicker and the shadowy forest was devoured in a murky white cloud.

Chapter One {Edited}

Blizzardstar sat calmly, keeping watch over the IceClan camp; his dream had frightened him more than he wanted to admit. The ground was blanketed in a fresh layer of snow, giving the clearing and the trees around it a very pristine appearance. The only marks in the new snow were Blizzardstar's huge paw prints, tracing around his den to the High Branch. His perch in the tall, half dead pine tree gave him the most perfect view of the entire camp, as well as the best place to hold meetings for the clan.

Watching over his camp atop this ancient branch seemed to calm his nerves. He could see practically everything at this height. To the left, he could see the warriors den, which was a large sweeping bush at the base of a tall oak tree. The apprentice's den was a few rabbit hops to the right, a smattering of shallow scoops in the earth among many tall stems of catmint and horsetail. Blizzardstar thought he could almost see the tip of Brokenpaw's black tail poking out from the tops of the leafy stalks.

The nursery was directly across the clearing from the warrior's den, a deep cave underneath the roots of an enormous oak tree. Soft squeaks from Quietstorm's litter could barely be heard on the chilly breeze. The medicine cat den, a large hollow boulder with a crack stretching horizontally across its face, was only a short distance from the nursery. Blizzardstar squinted his eyes, trying to make out Tinypool's silver pelt in the darkness.

The elders' den was somewhat secluded, sitting closer to the apprentice's den on the opposite side of Tinypool's den. They lay underneath a very low pine tree, the lowest branches barely tall enough for a cat to crawl under. Last was Blizzardstar's den, hidden in the hollow tree which he now perched upon. If he looked down at just the right angle, he could see his flattened nest in the middle of the rotted trunk.

As his gaze swept over the camp several more times, he noticed that his warriors had begun to stir in their den. Wildflight was sitting

close to an old stump, already waiting to organize the day's patrols. Blizzardstar knew that his deputy was used to her daily routine. He usually tried to stay out of her way until she had finished her duties.

Suddenly, a rustling could be heard from the apprentice's den. The tall stems were waving wildly, and flashes of fur could be seen through the leaves.

"That's enough." Blizzardstar heard Wildflight growl as she stalked over and pulled a tiny white cat, Webpaw, away from the other apprentices. Sometimes he could be such a trouble maker.

Carefully, Blizzardstar clawed his way back down his tree and into the snow bank nestled against the trunk. Seeing as Wildflight had the patrols taken care of, he decided he would slip through the trees surrounding the camp and visit the scene of yesterday's battle. Hopefully he could find the light that Mudstar was talking about.

He jumped out of the thick pile of snow and slid around his tree, finding himself staring out into the open forest. Tall pine trees with branches weighted with snow stretched away into the distance. Blizzardstar breathed in deeply, feeling the cool morning air tickle his nose. This was HIS forest; not even Breezeclan would be foolish enough to try and survive in this prickly pine grove.

Taking one more quick look back into the camp, he sped away through the trees. The cool air felt amazing blowing through his fur, helping his nerves to relax and unwind. He didnt't exactly know what to do when he got there. But he couldn't stop now, not with the sting of snow against his pads urging him onward.

He raced past dozens of trees and rocks, leaping over the deepest snowbanks. After awhile the trunks seemed to blur at his sides as he ran steadily onward. Then suddenly, the trees thinned out to a snow covered field. Blizzardstar realized he had reached the border and was crossing the scent line. The snow was still stained with blood and chunks of fur littered the ground. Blizzardstar took a deep breath, looking at the steep hill that rose like an enormous snow bank at the edge of the field. Taking a slow step backward, he glanced back nervously towards his territory.

If an enemy patrol were to find him here, he wasn't sure what would happen. But Mudstar's message was still echoing in his ears, forcing him to continue padding into BreezeClan's territory. He wasn't exactly sure where to start looking. Mudstar had been very vague, not giving him much direction on where to search for the light. As he started to sniff around for any unusual smells, BreezeClan scent swamped his senses. He could feel his heart skip with panic, his fur rising along his spine. What would they say, finding the leader of their rival clan trespassing on their land? Blizzardstar had enough problems as it was, without having hostile Breezeclan warriors on his tail. He turned to race back to the tree line but a feminine voice made him freeze in his tracks.

"Blizzardstar? What are you doing on my territory?" The large white tom turned towards the voice, noticing a delicate calico she-cat. Her fur was striking shades of black, orange, and white; looking like dappled sunlight on the forest floor. As she grew closer, he noticed she looked equally curious and confused.

"I just got a little lost," he mewed hastily, hoping she didn't notice his whiskers twitching with tension. She took a few tentative steps forward, sniffing his pelt lightly. As she neared, Blizzardstar inhaled her scent; fragrant like morning dew and ripe spring berries. He could feel his heartbeat quicken as her muzzle grazed over his neck fur. He hoped she wouldn't notice how uncomfortable he felt. As she stepped back and gazed into his eyes, he could sense that her emotions were whirling like a fierce storm.

"You should return to your territory, before one of my clanmates sees you," she urged after several heartbeats, "my apprentice is near and he will definitely report your intrusion to Oakstar." He felt a tiny twinge of regret. For some strange reason, he had not hoped that was what she would say.

He could scent the other BreezeClan cat's scent in the air, getting closer every second. Taking one last look at the she-cat, he turned and raced away towards the safety of IceClan territory. After he had reached the cover of the trees, he stopped to catch his breath. His mad dash back to the pine trees had left his sides heaving for air.

He looked back out of the pine trees towards the hillside, hoping to see that she-cat's dappled coat once more. He had been so overcome with panic that he hadn't even recognized who he was talking to. As he thought back on it now, dread started to creep across his fur. That she-cat was Spottedrose, the daughter of Oakstar!

His fur shivered all over at the thought of her telling Oakstar about him trespassing on their territory. Then he recalled their unusually close encounter on the hillside, and how her closeness had made him feel. He dared to think that she would stay silent. He knew that if she was an IceClan warrior, he wouldn't have been able to resist the connection that he had felt. For a brief second, he thought how crazy it would be for him to have feelings for a BreezeClan cat.

Only in silly nursery tales, did cats of different clans fall in love. They all ended horribly, with violence and death. This wasn't out of the ordinary, battle and blood shed was a common occurrence in these lands. IceClan and BreezeClan had been at war for countless seasons, fighting particularly bloody battles over land and prey to feed and shelter their kin. In the most recent skirmish, BreezeClan had lost many cats, including their skilled medicine cat, Lilybloom. She had been mistaken for a battling warrior and was killed by an unknown IceClan warrior.

Blizzardstar knew her death was unfortunate, but Mudstar had been clearly upset in his dream the night before. The old leader had been sure that her death was not just an accident. He remembered Mudstar told him that violence and blood shed was not the way they were meant to be, that he must choose the right path. Maybe peace would rule the forest, and then Blizzardstar could be content to watch his kin live long and prosperous lives. Maybe he could grow to respect the BreezeClan warriors.

Of course, Oakstar would be eager to shed blood over the death of Lilybloom. Blizzardstar knew that the BreezeClan leader wouldn't forget for many seasons. He would certainly urge many more battles to avenge their old medicine cat.

If Spottedrose were to tell Oakstar about this incident, Blizzardstar could assume a battle was sure to quickly follow. His heart felt sick at the thought of his warriors fighting after Mudstar's dreadful

omen that previous night. There was always the chance that Oakstar could have received an omen in his dreams as well, but Oakstar was a very heard headed tom. There was also the chance that Spottedrose would stay silent. But he felt that either of those choices were just short of a miracle.

Chapter Two {Edited}

Spottedrose padded quickly back through Breezeclan territory, Bearpaw only a few paces behind her. She was still buzzing with conflicting emotions from her encounter with Blizzardstar near the border. Bearpaw had questioned her about the strange Iceclan scent on their territory but she didn't give anything away. She could hear Bearpaw muttering behind her as they traveled quickly over the rolling hills on the way back to camp.

"It just seems weird to me that there was such fresh IceClan scent and you didn't want to go looking for them," Bearpaw meowed, "the other apprentices always brag about pouncing on enemy patrols at the border." Spottedrose flashed a glance back towards him as they crested the massive hill that led to the lush valley that BreezeClan called home.

As they neared the entrance, a spiny tunnel of thorn branches among the foliage; the hustle and bustle of her clanmates could be heard outside the barrier. "It sounds like they are practicing battle moves in there." Bearpaw mewed enviously. Spottedrose flicked her tail over her apprentice's ear. "Your battle moves are fine." she mewed a little more harshly than she intended. Bearpaw was a little too keen to practice fighting than she liked. She preferred him to practice hunting or to help her patrol the border.

As the pair entered camp, an orange tabby pelt flew backwards at Spottedrose, bowling her over. "Foxstreak!" she hissed angrily, shoving the orange she-cat off of her. Bearpaw was giggling just behind, making her feel even more embarrassed.

Foxstreak stood quickly, shaking out her orange tabby striped fur. "Sorry Spottedrose! I didn't expect Snakefang to kick me so hard." she puffed, turning to inspect her left flank for scratches.

"Well maybe he should be more careful." she growled as she looked over at the black and white tom. He was sneering at Foxstreak from the center of the clearing, his venomous green eyes flashing with

triumph. The rest of Breezeclan were crowded around the edge of the clearing, watching the battle practice with eager expressions.

"Now it's your turn to practice your battle moves." Nightvolt mewed as he approached Spottedrose from the crowd. The gray tabby tom was thick with muscle, his black stripes crisscrossed with scars from past skirmishes. Spottedrose felt uneasy at the thought of practicing battle moves with Nightvolt. Sometimes he could be a ruthless fighter.

"I think that's enough for today." a strong, confident voice called from the shelter of a large, shadowy holly bush. It was Oakstar, sitting at the entrance to his den. He must have been watching Nightvolt from his perch. "You may all carry on with your assigned duties." he meowed as the clan dispersed. The senior warriors stood and started to pad towards Oakstar; clearly not intending to join patrols like the other warriors.

Most of the warriors padded away to leave on patrol. A few disappeared back into their den, hidden in a thick weave of bracken at the edge of the clearing. Bearpaw and Vinepaw, the only apprentices, padded over to their den. It was a snow covered scoop in the earthen floor. One of the large trees that surrounded camp bent downwards, protecting the apprentice's den from any wind or weather. Dappledleaf, the only elder, returned to her nest in the elder's den. The fallen, hollow log was a perfect resting place for any elderly warriors.

"Our skills are improving greatly. Soon we will be ready to take our vengeance on Iceclan." Oakstar mewed softly as the senior warriors began to huddle around him. Spottedrose quickly padded over and was hovering just far enough away that she could eavesdrop but not be noticed.

The deputy, Hailstorm, as well as the two most senior warriors, Rockclaw and Snakefang, were tightly huddled around Oakstar. Their tails were whipping back and fourth and their shoulders were hunched in secrecy.

"When will we arrange a battle patrol to send over the border?" Hailstorm mewed in a hushed tone.

Oakstar lifted his paw and rested it on Hailstorm's shoulder, "We will give them a false sense of security for now and strike at the next full moon." he mewed. Spottedrose could see his leaf green eyes sparkling with excitement. Since Lilybloom had died, he had been wild and relentless for his inevitable revenge on Blizzardstar and the whole of Iceclan. It was only natural for a leader to be torn over the loss of their medicine cat.

Suddenly, Oakstar's gaze focused on Spottedrose. "Shouldn't you be taking Bearpaw out to practice his fighting skills?" he called, a gentle warning in his tone.

She shook out her fur, embarrassed at being caught by her father. But I'm not a naughty kit, she thought angrily. "We just got back from patrolling the border!" she mewed angrily, flicking her tail in defiance.

Her fur burned even hotter as Oakstar's gaze hardened. He pushed past Snakefang and Rockclaw, padding forward until he stood in front of Spottedrose.

"I know how you feel about this whole thing, but if you just do as I say there won't be any issues," he mewed under his breath, "our clanmates already think I favor you." His tail flicked around to touch her flank but she flinched away.

"It's just so pointless to keep fighting," she hissed, "all it does is bring more death!" She had voiced her opinion about this more than a pawful of times but it seemed like her father never wanted to listen.

"I know it seems like that, but it's what needs to be done. I know what is best for our clan." Oakstar grunted.

Spottedrose could tell that he was becoming frustrated; like he always did when they discussed the topic. "Now, if you don't want to take Bearpaw out to practice fighting techniques, you can go with Willowleaf and Vinepaw. They are going hunting at the stream." he dismissed her, his voice stern and commanding.

Spottedrose growled softly, feeling rebellious in the face of her

father. A soft voice reached Spottedrose from across the clearing, calling her into the shade of some ferns. It was Dewdrop, the new head medicine cat. Spottedrose slunk over, her ears flat with anger.

"Don't be mad at Oakstar," Dewdrop mewed kindly as Spottedrose sat down beside her, "he is a wise, noble leader. He will lead us down the right path." The silver and white she-cat was looking at Spottedrose intently, clearly hoping the young warrior would understand. "But we need to stop fighting." Spottedrose persisted.

Dewdrop huffed, "But fighting is our way of life. Lilybloom was my mentor, I want her death avenged just as much as Oakstar does." Spottedrose just stayed silent, clearly not willing to speak any more with the stubborn medicine cat. How could she ever hope to change her clan mate's minds if she couldn't even convince Dewdrop that there needed to be peace?

Spottedrose turned and padded away, her tail falling down to trail in the dust. Dewdrop mewed a soft goodbye before turning to her den in the ferns. In the end, she felt just as wretched and hopeless as she did before her talk with Dewdrop. She vaguely remembered Willowleaf's warm greeting as she joined them for the hunt. She was too busy fuming with resentment towards her superiors. All my clanmates will suffer from my father's wrath and greed, and no one will even listen to me to stop it. Her thoughts turned dark as Willowleaf led her and Vinepaw out into the forest.

Chapter Three {Edited}

Several days passed in the snowy pine forest without any sign of vengeful Breezeclan warriors. Blizzardstar almost felt some sort of gratitude towards that strange calico, Spottedrose. He wished he had been able to find the light. Instead, he had been plagued by unnatural thoughts for that pretty BreezeClan warrior.

Early this morning, his medicine cat had come to visit him in his den. Tinypool seemed to be acting oddly. She muttered something about strange dreams but quickly changed the subject to ask him for a warrior escort to go harvest herbs near the BreezeClan border.

After she had left with her escourt, Blizzardstar exited his den and took a deep breath. He knew he had a very important task today. It was finally time to give Webpaw his warrior name!

Quickwater had come to Blizzardstar, claiming that her apprentice had learned the ways of a warrior and was fit for his new name. It was clear to see that Webpaw had worked hard to earn his warrior name. He had fought hard and effortlessly in the battle with Breezeclan. Blizzardstar's pelt tingled with happiness; Webpaw would find his way as a warrior and finally stop tormenting the younger apprentices.

He quickly clawed his way up the trunk of his den and sat on the High Branch. Blizzardstar yowled loudly, calling his clan to gather before him, "Let all those old enough to feel the snow sting their paws, gather for a Clan meeting!"

Slowly, the warriors and apprentices gathered in a crowd beneath his branch. Reedfur and Timberstrike, the elders, sat outside their den to watch the ceremony. Blizzardstar knew that Quietstorm would stay in the nursery with her kits. They were still too small and vulnerable to be left alone. He looked down at his warriors again, noticing Quickwater and Webpaw sitting tall at the front of the group. Both of their eyes were shining with excitement.

His tail flicked joyously as he called out to his clan, "IceClan! Today we are here to bless one of our apprentices and welcome him as a full warrior!" He looked down in the sea of pelts and rested his gaze on a smaller white and silver striped tom. Webpaw's pelt was shivering with excitement.

"Webpaw, step forward." his call echoed through the trees surrounding the camp. The silver striped apprentice padded forward quickly, his tail spiked in all directions. "Quickwater has trained you to be a skilled, knowledgeable young cat. She believes you are ready to become a warrior at last," he meowed, "Is it your wish to become a warrior and protect and defend this clan, even at the cost of your life?" his question hung in the air for only moments.

"I do!" he answered eagerly.

"Then from this day forward your name shall be Webstripe! We commend you for your persistence and your skill in hunting. May Starclan always light your path." he mewed warmly. The whole clan erupted into joyful yowls, crowding around the new warrior. "Webstripe! Webstripe!"

Blizzardstar watched happily from his perch on the High Branch. Naming a new warrior was always a great way to start a new day. "Tonight you shall sit in silent vigil, as is tradition for all new warriors." he reminded him. Webstripe was still being crowded and congratulated by all of his clan mates, Blizzardstar wasn't sure if he had heard.

He leapt down from his branch, clearing the snow banks and landing on firm ground. "Wildflight!" he called to the brown she-cat. She was sitting a few paces away from Webstripe, organizing the daily patrols as the other warriors slowly dispersed. He quickly trotted to her side and mewed hastily, "if you're sending any border patrols out near that big hill next to Breezeclan territory, I would like to join."

Wildflight looked at her leader suspiciously but nodded, "yes, Hawkslash just went to go get Meadowshine and Stormpaw. They should be ready shortly." Blizzardstar nodded approvingly, turning away to go find the small patrol.

Hawkslash, the brown tabby warrior, was sitting next to the camp entrance. He may be the eldest warrior but he was still as lively and stubborn as an apprentice. His tail was tapping impatiently on the ground next to him, his claws working in and out of the dirt. Blizzardstar trotted over to him, his tail lifted in a warm greeting. "I'm here to join your border patrol." he explained quickly as he sat at Hawkslash's side.

The tom dipped his head and looked across the clearing, looking for Meadowshine and Stormpaw. "Let's hope there's no problems near the border." Hawkslash mewed warily, his gaze flashing to Blizzardstar.

"I'm sure there won't be any issues." he responded hastily, trying to calm Hawkslash's ruffling fur. Surely Breezeclan would want peace after they had lost Lilybloom, and countless other warriors. Both the clans had lost so many great warriors, over all the countless battles that came with time. Thinking about it now made Blizzardstar's pelt crawl. He didn't know why he had felt such pride in his recent victory over BreezeClan.

Hawkslash didn't seem convinced, he just shrugged his shoulders and twitched his whiskers. In that moment, Meadowshine appeared with her apprentice, Stormpaw.

"Finally!" Hawkslash growled, his disapproving stare boring into Stormpaw. Meadowshine glared at Hawkslash, her tortoiseshell fur spiking. "He was just checking on the elders before we left!" she snapped.

Blizzardstar sighed as the two warriors started to bicker, his attention flitting to Stormpaw. The apprentice was looking out the entrance, slightly sniffing the air. "Are you ready to leave then?" Blizzardstar meowed, turning his attention back to the two warriors.

"I suppose so." Hawkslash mewed sarcastically before turning and leading the way out of camp. Meadowshine and Stormpaw hurried after him but Blizzardstar caught himself hanging back.

It felt like the looming threat of an attack from Iceclan was taking

its toll on most of the warriors. Everyone assumed that the vengeful Oakstar would certainly launch an attack in the coming moons. Blizzardstar's fur itched with worry, something he had not felt in his whole life as a warrior. What if Mudstar's omen was true, and his Clan would truly be lost in darkness? He jumped up quickly and sped out of camp, hoping the patrol had not realized his slight absence.

His uncomfortable feelings continued to ebb as he followed Meadowshine's scent through the undergrowth. He felt foolish to have been so willing to bring his clanmates into battle in the past. He didn't want to lose any more of his clan mates to this pointless fighting. He truly hoped Oakstar felt the same.
~~

As the small patrol neared the border, it was becoming less and less possible for Stormpaw to keep quiet. He was bouncing with energy, hoping to meet a patrol of Breezeclan warriors.

"You know, we actually don't want to be spotted." Blizzardstar mewed to the young apprentice. Meadowshine purred in agreement, resting her tail over Stormpaw's back. "Show your leader how sensible you can be." she meowed quietly.

Stormpaw huffed but he settled down considerably, his tail tip twitching. Blizzardstar wasn't sure if they would end up seeing a Breezeclan patrol, but he would rather they didn't.

Suddenly, a ray of sunlight could be seen at the edge of the trees. Blizzardstar ran forward, looking out on to Breezeclan's territory. The massive snowy hillside was dotted with a few lone trees and plenty of clumps of bushes and weeds. It seemed like the blood and fur he had seen there yesterday had disappeared.

"Wow..." Stormpaw mumbled next to him. Blizzardstar looked down and saw the apprentice gazing out at the wide expanse of white snow that blanketed the ground.

"Our territory would look like that too, if we didn't have so many trees." Meadowshine meowed from behind them. Hawkslash had padded away a few fox lengths to mark the border.

Blizzardstar lifted his tail for Stormpaw and Meadowshine to be silent, a Breezeclan patrol had appeared and was approaching from the brow of the hill. In the lead was Rockclaw, with Foxstreak and Spottedrose close behind him. They must have spotted Blizzardstar's small patrol. They were charging straight towards the tree line.

Blizzardstar knew that Rockclaw was a very prickly warrior. He must be eager to confront the IceClan cats, hoping to start a fight or maybe worse.

"Hawkslash!" Blizzardstar called the warrior back over, hoping he had the sense to not provoke a fight. Hawkslash quickly padded over, his hackles raised. "Calm yourself." Blizzardstar warned as the Breezeclan patrol grew closer.

"What are you doing so near to our border?" Rockclaw called threateningly. He had stopped a couple rabbit hops away, Foxstreak and Spottedrose flanking him. Blizzardstar tried to catch the calico's eye but she was staring down at her paws.

"Just marking the border." Blizzardstar answered casually, letting his tail curl around his paws as he sat down. Rockclaw took an aggressive pose, his claws sliding out into the snow covered ground. "Well we don't want you so close! Go retreat back to your trees and leave us alone!" he snarled.

Blizzardstar's paws prickled. He was trying to prevent a fight! "We were just marking the border." he insisted, trying to keep his voice calm.

But now Rockclaw was stalking forward, his hackles raised and his teeth bared in a snarl. Foxstreak was frozen right behind him, her orange tabby fur fluffed up to twice her size. Spottedrose looked on in dismay, shuffling her paws. Blizzardstar felt slightly relieved that the she-cat didn't agree with threatening his patrol.

Blizzardstar began to back away, hoping his warriors would retreat as well. Meadowshine quickly pushed Stormpaw back into the safety of the trees while Hawkslash padded closer to Rockclaw. His brown tabby fur was spiked in all directions, his muscles bulging in his legs.

"Take one step onto our land and I'll shred your ears." Hawkslash hissed, his tail flicking violently back and fourth. Rockclaw snickered, crouching low against the ground.

"Why, are you afraid that I'll kill you just like you killed Lilybloom? No, I'll just teach you that Breezeclan aren't so easily pushed around!" Rockclaw yowled, louder than a crack of thunder on the darkest night. In an instant, Rockclaw flung himself at Hawkslash, his claws flying like a whirlwind.

"No!" Blizzardstar rushed forward, trying hard to throw himself on top of Rockclaw. The senior warrior was sturdy and strong, his dusty brown pelt hard with tensed muscles. Blizzardstar's fear grew to panic as Hawkslash's agonized yowling sounded from below Rockclaw's belly.

Suddenly, Spottedrose appeared from behind Rockclaw; she was trying to wrap her paws around the tom. She couldn't get ahold of him, and Blizzardstar could not pull Hawkslash out from underneath Rockclaw. With a small sigh, Spottedrose unsheathed her claws and sank them into her clanmate's shoulders, pulling backward with all her strength.

"Get off of him!" she hissed. She could feel her claws tearing the skin near his neck, dangerously close to his jugular. She was relieved to feel him releasing his grip on Hawkslash, but she felt her claws suddenly snag in Rockclaw's fur. She quickly ripped her claws from his pelt, his neck squirting with blood. Spottedrose leaped backward as Rockclaw rolled onto the snow dusted ground in front of her. His blood was already starting to speckle the dirt a crimson hue.

Foxstreak gasped in shock. She hadn't moved a muscle the whole time. Blizzardstar wasn't sure if she didn't want to fight or if she was scared to. "Is Rockclaw dead?" she mewed, her voice hardly more than a whisper.

But Blizzardstar did not hear her. He was crouching next to Hawkslash, deep gouge marks etched across his closed eyes. "I can't see," he wailed, his voice shrill and frightened like a tiny kit.

Rockclaw was laying in a motionless heap, his claws still dripping with Hawkslash's blood. "You killed him," Foxstreak yowled at Blizzardstar, "you've killed Lilybloom and now you've killed Rockclaw!"

Spottedrose just stared at the scene, too shocked to speak. Blizzardstar wished he could tell her it would be alright. Rockclaw would get up in a few moments and they could all return to their separate camps.

But Rockclaw's fur was already growing cold in the frigid air, his eyes closed as if peacefully sleeping. Spottedrose shook herself, seeming to collect her emotions for a second. "Lets carry him back to camp." she insisted, hoping to get Foxstreak to leave Blizzardstar and his warriors alone.

By now, Blizzardstar, Meadowshine, and Stormpaw had helped Hawkslash to stand and were already slowly heading away through the trees. The snowy white leader took one last glance back at Spottedrose. Her azure eyes were watching him, piercing into his fur like ice. I'm so sorry, this wasn't meant to happen, he thought as he led his broken clan mate back to camp.

Chapter Four {Edited}

The walk home was long and depressing. Hawkslash could not stop yelping in pain. His eyes constantly dripped with blood. Stormpaw had run ahead to warn the medicine cat, Tinypool. All of his earlier eagerness had vanished to be replaced with fear. His eyes were dark with worry for Hawkslash. Meadowshine flicked her tail over the brown tabby's back, "you shouldn't have provoked a fight!" she mewed angrily. "Now Oakstar's going to be even more angry with us." she hissed. Blizzardstar realized that the she-cat was right, they hadn't faced a retaliation for Lilybloom's death but now an attack was surely coming.

"We must warn the others." Blizzardstar mewed, his tone tinged with urgency. They could only travel so fast with the blinded Hawkslash, so it felt like ages before they reached the camp entrance.

Blizzardstar pushed past Meadowshine and Hawkslash, bounding into the camp clearing. "Wildflight!" he called to his deputy, who was sitting next to the fresh kill pile. She looked like she had been getting ready to grab something to eat, but this was far more urgent than Wildflight filling her belly. The brown she-cat bounded over, not before taking one last glance at the fresh kill.

"Has something happened?" she mewed worriedly, noticing the blood sprayed across Blizzardstar's white pelt.

"We were attacked at the border," he began slowly, "Hawkslash was blinded and the senior warrior, Rockclaw, was killed." Wildflight's eyes widened in horror, her claws digging into the ground.

"Surely Rockclaw can't be dead?" she mewed, her voice shaking with fear. The deputy knew that Oakstar would not take this lightly. There was sure to be war.

"He was laying in a pool of blood, he was definitely dead." Blizzardstar mewed grimly, bowing his head. He knew that the

blind Hawkslash had not even lay a paw on Rockclaw, so what had killed him? Then he remembered, Spottedrose had ripped her clanmate off of Hawkslash! Maybe she had been the one to accidentally kill the senior warrior?

"Blizzardstar?" Wildflight meowed, her questioning stare boring into his own. He shook his head, looking down at his paws. "We must prepare the clan for battle." he whispered. He really wished there was a way to avoid it, but Oakstar was blood thirsty. Blizzardstar could remember when he had felt this way as well, but he couldn't imagine being so naïve again. He would not let his clanmates fall to unnecessary deaths.

Wildflight nodded and quickly turned away, calling for the other warriors to join her. Blizzardstar watched in silence, his pelt prickling like pine needles. As the news spread, shocked mews and outraged yowling sounded around the camp.

He waited a few more moments before turning to Tinypool's den. He knew he must check on Hawkslash. As he entered, he could hear the medicine cat tending to the blinded warrior. She must have returned from gathering herbs while Blizzardstar was out near the border. He found it odd that he hadn't scented her while they were there. Her voice was calming and smooth as she tended to Hawkslash, like the wind through the trees.

"How is he?" Blizzardstar asked softly as he came to stand at Tinypool's side. She turned to look at him, her gaze wild with fury and terror but in a flash it was gone. "Oh, its only you," she sighed, "the bleeding has stopped but he will surely be blind for the rest of his life."

Hawkslash shifted in his makeshift nest, turning his sightless eyes to his leader. "I'm sorry I got us into this," he wailed, "now Oakstar will definitely kill us all!"

Tinypool quickly rested her gray spotted paw on his side, trying to calm him down once more. "Surely Oakstar will not think it's necessary to kill us all." she reasoned. But Blizzardstar saw her eyes darken with terror once more, making him feel like a dark cloud was hovering menacingly above them.

Slowly, he took a few paw steps backwards and out of the cavernous boulder. The faces of his warriors turned to him as he exited the medicine den. They seemed to have gathered to speak with him. It was the white and black spotted tom, Sootsplash, who spoke first. "Is it true?" his harsh voice echoed across camp. "Is Oakstar really going to try to attack us over Rockclaw's attack?"

Blizzardstar felt his heart beating fast, not truly knowing the answer to his question. Thankfully, Meadowshine stepped forward and turned to look at Sootsplash. "Foxstreak seems to think that we are responsible for his death. It is reasonable to think that Oakstar will as well." she meowed, loud enough for everyone to hear her.

Then, Blizzardstar got a crazy idea. One that would either fix everything, or doom him to Oakstar's vengeance. "I will take a small patrol to Breezeclan's camp, so we can talk with Oakstar," he mewed, thinking it all over in his head once more, "I will try to reason with him that it was not Iceclan who had killed Rockclaw."

Many of his warriors looked uncertain, their tails flicking and their ears flat. "How can you be sure Oakstar won't just try and kill you?" an off-white she-cat meowed at the front of the group. Blizzardstar shrugged, "I'm not sure, Pearlfang. Hopefully Oakstar is willing to settle this with words and not claws." He hoped he sounded more reassuring than he felt. His pelt felt like it was crawling with fleas.

"Shall we leave now?" Wildflight whispered in his ear, making him jump. Blizzardstar shook his head, looking through the mass of cats as they all departed to resume their duties. He waved his tail at a dark gray tabby, beckoning her over to himself and Wildflight.

"Quickwater, will you come with me and Wildflight to the Breezeclan camp?" he asked hopefully. Other than Pearlfang, Quickwater was one of Blizzardstar's most senior warriors. She was still quick and strong but carried the thoughts and wisdom of an elder.

She nodded quickly and Blizzardstar swept his tail over her pelt as he stood and made his way to the camp entrance.

The border skirmish felt like a life time away. He felt like he wasn't even entirely sure it had happened. His thoughts swam like a dark tide as he led the small patrol back to the border.
~~

Spottedrose and Foxstreak returned to camp after their long trek carrying Rockclaw from the border. His body had already started to grow stiff and cold, his scent fading to be replaced with a sickly sweet aroma.

Snakefang was first to see them arrive and he rushed over, his eyes raking over Rockclaw's body.

"What happened? Is he injured?" Snakefang stuttered, his eyes round with worry for his denmate.

"I'm sorry Snakefang, your brother was killed," Foxstreak mewed softly, her shoulders slumping under Rockclaw's weight. Snakefang yowled, his fur spiking in anger and sorrow, "Oakstar!"

As Spottedrose and Foxstreak lay the body in the center of camp, Oakstar appeared at the entrance to his den under the tiny bush. His pelt was ruffled and messy with sleep, his eyes only half open. He quickly strode over to Spottedrose's side, looking down at Rockclaw's lifeless body.

"I can scent Iceclan on his pelt." he mewed after he sniffed the gouges in Rockclaw's neck.

Spottedrose shuffled her paws, "he had attacked an Iceclan patrol at the border. I tried to get him to come back but he just wouldn't stop." she rested her tail gently on the slain warrior's shoulders.

"So Iceclan thinks they can just kill whomever they like now?" Oakstar questioned her, his voice harsh with fury. Spottedrose opened her mouth to object but he didn't wait for a response. In a flash, he bounded over to his perch on top of a large boulder and yowled a summons to his warriors.

"Warriors of Breezeclan, gather here so I may share news with you!" his yowl pierces through the trees. In a matter of seconds, everyone

had appeared at the foot of the boulder to hear their leader speak.

"It seems that Rockclaw has fallen victim to our ruthless neighbors," he yowled, "I believe it is time for us to attack and take our revenge on those scrawny tree dwellers!"

Spottedrose looked on in horror, her pelt rising along her spine. Surely her father couldn't insist on attacking Iceclan! As her clanmates yowled in agreement, she quickly slid around the edge of the camp and ran out onto the hillside. She had to find Blizzardstar, and warn him that Iceclan was in danger!

Chapter Five {Edited}

Blizzardstar ran swiftly through the towering pine trees of his territory. His paws skidded and slided in the patches of snow. He could hear Wildflight and Quickwater behind him, their breaths coming in fast, shallow gasps. They had wanted to reach the border quickly. Blizzardstar was sure that Oakstar would be quick to send an attack as soon as he saw Rockclaw.

They neared the border, the ground turning to patches of grass and snow. The brilliant sun shone off the snow coated hillside, reflecting through the trees and into the shadowy Iceclan forest. "Wait." Blizzardstar signaled with his tail for the she-cats to stop. Up on the hillside, he could see a spotted calico pelt racing towards the border.

"That's Spottedrose," Wildflight mewed warily, sinking her claws into the grass. Quickwater sat, perfectly content to stay silent and watch what would happen. Blizzardstar stepped out of the cover of the trees to meet the Breezeclan she-cat. Her fur was ruffled and her eyes were wide with urgency.

"Spottedrose..." Blizzardstar meowed questioningly as she skidded to a stop right in front of him, "has something happened?"

"Other than the death of Rockclaw," she rasped as she caught her breath, "Oakstar is positively mad! He is sending out the clan to come and attack your camp!"

Quickwater had stood while Spottedrose was talking and slunk to Blizzardstar's side. "Well what are we supposed to do against a whole clan? They are surely all intent to wipe us out." Quickwater murmured, her voice thick with worry. "Should I return to camp and warn the others?" she looked up at Blizzardstar desperately.

He nodded, his muscles tense in his shoulders. The dark gray tabby she-cat quickly turned and ran back the way they had come, her tail streaming behind her.

Wildflight stepped up to Blizzardstar's side, her voice unusually calm, "we have come to speak with Oakstar. We thought we could try and work this out without the need to shed our clanmate's blood."

Spottedrose shook her head sadly, "Oakstar will want to kill you both, for the deaths of Rockclaw and Lilybloom." she sounded defeated. Blizzardstar growled and stood, padding past Spottedrose onto BreezeClan territory.

"Hawkslash didn't kill Rockclaw! If I have to go there and fight Oakstar myself over my warrior's honor, I will!" Wildflight quickly bounded after her leader, looking apologetically at Spottedrose as she passed. Blizzardstar was still fuming, his claws itching to slash across Oakstar's muzzle.

How dare he assume that it was Iceclan who had killed Rockclaw? He could hear Spottedrose running up behind them, she was mewing for them to stop.

But he couldn't stop, he had to convince Oakstar that there was no reason for war. The anger faded from his thoughts. He knew that he would not do much convincing if he attacked Oakstar in his camp.

Spottedrose appeared at Blizzardstar's side, her eyes sad and questioning. "Are you really going to fight Oakstar?" she meowed quietly, sounding almost dissapointed.

"No," he sighed, "I just want to talk with him. Maybe fighting can be avoided." Spottedrose nodded, staying silent until they reached the Breezeclan camp.

It was a deep valley in the rolling hills, sheltered with a dense ring of ferns, bushes, and tall weeds. Spottedrose pushed through first, her tail lightly brushing Blizzardstar's nose as he followed her. Almost at once, the camp grew eerily quiet. All of the cats had turned their hate filled gazes towards Blizzardstar and Wildflight.

"What are you doing here?" a deep, menacing voice called from the shelter of a large boulder. A massive brown and white tabby glared from the shadows, it was Oakstar.

"I just came to speak with you about an incident on the border earlier this morning." Blizzardstar meowed confidently, keeping his gaze level with the Breezeclan leader.

"Oh yes, when your clan killed Rockclaw!" Oakstar hissed as he slipped out of the shadows. He padded closer to Blizzardstar, his teeth bared.

"We did not kill Rockclaw," Blizzardstar insisted, "he attacked us across the border. Rockclaw intruded onto our territory."

Oakstar yowled, "Silence!" Blizzardstar felt his heart stop in his chest, his blood turned cold as Oakstar sank back on his haunches to pounce.

Spottedrose leaped forward just as Oakstar sprang. She crashed into his side and bowled him over. Some of the warriors around them gasped with astonishment. Others growled and hissed at the calico she-cat.

She stood slowly, keeping her eye fixed on Oakstar. "I will not let you attack Blizzardstar when he has come to talk in peace," she spat angrily, her back arching. "We have seen enough death, the fighting has to stop!"

Oakstar stared, completely baffled, it didn't seem like he knew what to say. But Blizzardstar could hear cats hissing and snarling all around him, "Coward!" "Traitor!"

Oakstar got to his paws, looking defeated even though he had only fallen in the dirt. His eyes were filled with anger and sorrow as he spoke, "Spottedrose, I can no longer favor you over our clanmates.. if any other warrior would have done this, they would be exiled."

Spottedrose gasped, not even daring to blink as Oakstar continued. "You have brought these murderous cats to our camp. I can only assume you went to warn them. It seems you are more loyal to Blizzardstar than you ever would be to your own clan," he mewed as he turned his hard glare onto the Iceclan leader.

Blizzardstar's heart thudded in his chest at Oakstar's words. Was

Spottedrose loyal to him? Surely not, Oakstar was just being delusional. The thought of Spottedrose going against her father's word for him made his stomach feel like it was filled with butterflies.

Spottedrose took a step forward, trying to catch her father's eye; but he would not meet her pleading gaze. "You are no longer a warrior of Breezeclan. If me or any of my warriors catch you on our territory again, we will rip your fur off." he growled.

Spottedrose looked frozen, rooted to the ground where she stood. Blizzardstar felt his heart breaking for her. He hadn't meant for her to be banished from her clan! Blizzardstar looked back at Oakstar, preparing to speak on Spottedrose's behalf. But Oakstar silenced him with a hiss.

"Just take her and leave," he yowled, "and never set foot on my territory again!"

The whole clan erupted into furious hisses and yowls as Blizzardstar, Wildflight, and Spottedrose ran out of the Breezeclan camp. They didn't dare to slow down as they crested the hill and ran down to the field. Blizzardstar looked back at Spottedrose once when they neared the border but he could tell her her heart was completely shattered. Her father had questioned her loyalty, and banished her from her home.

"We will figure something out." he mewed confidently as he looked forward once more. He heard Wildflight grunt in agreement but Spottedrose stayed silent. Oh Spottedrose, he thought, I am so sorry.

Chapter Six {Edited}

A line of warriors shielded the camp entrance as Blizzardstar approached. They all relaxed as they realized it was their leader and not an angry patrol of Breezeclan warriors.

Quickwater stepped forward, coming to stand in front of Blizzardstar. "Were you able to talk to Oakstar?" she asked hopefully.

"No, he seems convinced that we should all pay for Lilybloom and Rockclaw's death." he mewed sadly. Wildflight also stepped forward, "Spottedrose just barely stopped Oakstar from ripping Blizzardstar to shreds," she sounded impressed. Blizzardstar had not thought that Spottedrose had won over the wiry Iceclan deputy.

A pretty golden brown she-cat spoke up from the back, her eyes shining. "Surely Oakstar would listen to his own daughter." she pointed out kindly.

"No.." Spottedrose choked, "he banished me from the clan."

Blizzardstar raised his tail for silence, "I can answer all of your questions in camp." he meowed before pushing through the battle line into camp.

Spottedrose followed him closely, the rest of the warriors following behind her. The camp was empty, except for Softgaze and her apprentice, Brokenpaw, guarding the nursery entrance. He quickly bounded over to his tree and jumped up onto one of the lower branches.

"Let all of Iceclan gather for a meeting," he yowled, not even taking a second to spare. The warriors all fanned out in the clearing. The other apprentices bounded from their den and the elders slunk from their dark corner of the camp. Spottedrose scooted close to Wildflight, casting a nervous glance at all of the warriors assembled.

"Iceclan, I do not bring good news," he began slowly, "it seems Oakstar is intent in exacting his revenge on us. He almost would have attacked me in his camp if it weren't for Spottedrose."
He dipped his head to the she-cat, noticing that her eyes were actually shining for the first time since they had left her old clan. A few warriors nodded approval and some crowded around her, brushing their pelts against her. To his relief, none of his warriors seemed angry or hostile towards her.

"She has been banished from BreezeClan for treason, but I have decided that she will have an important place in Iceclan!" he yowled, feeling his heart lifting with each word. She may be upset over her banishment but Blizzardstar was eager to make her feel welcome in the pine forest. He knew that with her at his side, maybe he could convince his warriors that peace really was the best way to live.

Spottedrose dipped her head graciously, "I will do my best to stay out of trouble." she promised him. He nodded in contentment, his tail slapping the branch he perched upon. "Our only hope for now is that Oakstar will be too preoccupied with his clan to try and attack us for the time being." he finished, dipping his head and jumping back down into the clearing.

Wildflight clung to his side at once, asking numerous questions. "Should I double to border patrols?" she asked hesitantly. Blizzardstar nodded, thinking that it wouldn't hurt to keep a little closer eye on their neighbors for now.

"If you think you can handle everything, I would like to take Spottedrose out for some air. I haven't properly thanked her yet for saving me."he meowed once he had finished answering his deputy's questions.

She flicked her tail, annoyed that he was thinking more about that she-cat than what they should do to prepare. Blizzardstar knew she would get over it, he did owe Spottedrose his life after all. As Wildflight turned to pad away, Blizzardstar spotted Spottedrose sitting with Quickwater and Pearlfang across the clearing. He eagerly approached, his tail waving in the air behind him.

"He doesn't usually need saving." Blizzardstar heard Pearlfang mumbling as he grew closer. Quickwater jabbed the opaque she-cat with her paw, "but he did this time! You should be more welcome to the cat who saved our leader's life!"

Spottedrose shuffled her paws nervously, "it's ok, I know it's strange with me being here." she mewed softly. Then she noticed Blizzardstar sitting a few paces away, obviously listening to the she-cats talking. She dipped her head politely to the two senior warriors and quickly bounded to Blizzardstar's side. "Quickwater is very kind to me." she purred, happiness shining in her lovely blue eyes.

"Quickwater is a wise she-cat." he murmured, letting his tail rest against Spottedrose's flank. "I wanted to see if you wanted a tour of our territory?" he asked curtly, a hint of nervousness in his tone.

"Of course," she meowed happily, "just us?"

"Yes, we can leave now if you'd like." he meowed, turning to pad out of the camp. She stood and followed, shaking out her silky orange, black, and white fur as she padded along.

Blizzardstar inhaled deeply, looking up at the sky. It was almost dusk, the sky growing darker with the approaching night. That border patrol truly seemed like a life time ago, so much had happened since that moment. But for now, Blizzardstar was happy to have Spottedrose walking alongside him.

~~

Blizzardstar took her around the border to the other side of the his territory, well away from her Breezeclan home. She was mostly quiet as she followed him. It was growing darker and colder with every passing minute.

"I just wanted to say thank you, for saving me." he mewed as they started to head back towards camp. Her silence pricked him like thorns. he had hoped they would have talked a bit more on their walk.

All of a sudden, she stopped and gazed at Blizzardstar intensely, her fur starting to fluff up. "I would not let Oakstar attack you! Not

when you came in peace. The forest needs more noble warriors, like you." she meowed seriously.

But I did want to fight, he thought inwardly. His claws still itched to slice Oakstar's face, his heart still burned to fight on Hawkslash's behalf. Then he remembered, something he had thought about once he had returned to camp after the patrol that morning. "Was it you who killed Rockclaw," he asked softly.

She closed her eyes and let her head dip low, her ears flat against her head. "I was only trying to get him away from Hawkslash," she confessed, "it wasn't right for Rockclaw to have attacked him so viciously."

Blizzardstar remembered how panicked Spottedrose had looked when her clanmate had sprung at Hawkslash. "Then why didn't you tell Oakstar that it was you?" he asked, puzzled. She whipped her tail around on the snowy ground, shaking her head sadly. "I wouldn't know if he would want to kill me or not. Rockclaw was his mentor, when he was just an apprentice. He gets so angry, I just couldn't be sure of my safety." her voice shrank to a frightened whisper, her pelt shivering.

"Let's get back to camp," Blizzardstar breathed, as he pressed himself against Spotterose and led her back to camp. She resumed her silence, a depressed look on her not-so-innocent face.
We have both made mistakes, Blizzardstar thought to himself. But I will protect you from Oakstar from now on.

Chapter Seven {Inserted}

Spottedrose awoke during the night, feeling warm and secure in her nest. When she opened her eyes, her heart fluttered with panic. This is not my nest, she thought slowly. She could hear a cat stirring beside her, a dark gray tabby. "Spottedrose? Are you awake?" the tabby she-cat mumbled, still half asleep.

Oh, yes. I'm in IceClan, she remembered. "Yes, Quickwater. I was just going to use the dirtplace." she meowed quietly, hoping not to wake any of the other warriors. Quickwater had been incredibly kind to her since they returned to camp. She had told Spottedrose that it was nice to see a BreezeClan warrior that didn't want to jump straight to battle. She could tell that none of the warriors really seemed too hostile towards her.

If only BreezeClan were more like this, she thought wistfully. Her clanmates were all too eager for battle, something she never really understood. Quickwater shifted again in her nest, turning to look at Spottedrose with her dark blue eyes. "Will you be able to find it ok?" she asked sleepily.

"I think so." she murmured as she stood and carefully left the den. She hadn't realized it was raining but soft drops thrummed her pelt as she left the safety of the bush. The moon shone bright and round through the haze of storm clouds in the night sky. Truthfully, she didn't really have to go make dirt, she was just feeling a tad homesick. She slept every night in the warrior's den, curled next to Foxstreak. They had been best friends since they were still kits in the nursery. They were both the only kits of their litters, so they clung together almost instantly.

Spottedrose's heart clenched with sadness, she wished she could have convinced her father that the clans did not need to live this way. She hadn't realized she had been just standing there, she noticed that her pelt was becoming drenched. Darting her gaze

around the clearing, she tried to find a secluded place to take shelter. She noticed a large tree, with a large hole near its base.

A hollow tree is perfect, she thought happily as she darted towards it. The rain had grown harder, stringing her skin underneath her pelt. As she reached the safety of the hollow bark, she felt her paw catch on something solid. She stumbled over and onto her side, cursing under her breath.

"What the--?" a startled voice growled from next to her. She squinted her eyes, noticing with horror that she had tripped over Blizzardstar. "Spottedrose? What are you doing here? Is something happening?" he asked hastily, fully awake in mere moments.

"I was just stuck out in the rain. I hadn't realized this was your den." she apologized, hoping he wouldn't be too angry with her. To her relief, he looked more concerned than angry. "I thought Quickwater had made a nest for you in the warrior's den?" he asked, clearly confused. She nodded quickly, "Yes, she did. I was just feeling uncomfortable. I got up to get some air, but I didn't realize it was raining."

"Well, there's no sense sending you back out in the cold. You could catch green cough with your pelt this wet," he meowed seriously, "you can share my nest with me for the night." Spottedrose felt her pelt prickle nervously, thinking about sharing the same nest with IceClan's leader.

"I suppose that's the smart thing to do." she agreed after several heartbeats. As she climbed into the nest beside him, she could feel his warm fur pressed against her pelt. She sighed in relief as she felt her limbs start to warm up. She felt herself starting to doze next to Blizzardstar, her eyelids growing heavy. She glanced up through the trunk of the tree to see the cloudy night sky peeking through dense, leafless branches.

"Do you really think we shouldn't fight?" she asked curiously, her voice blurred with sleepiness. She could feel him stiffen next to her, as if the question had startled him. "Yes," he meowed after a few moment's hesitation, "all fighting does is bring death to our loved ones. All I have left are my warriors. I don't want to see anyone else

die an unnecessary death."

Spottedrose shook her head, trying to wake herself some more. She felt that she needed to have this talk with him. "Are all of your kin with StarClan?" she asked softly, hoping he would be willing to tell her more.

"Yes, my mother and father have both died in battle. Even my gentle sister was claimed this way. I've seen many families torn apart by this need for constant fighting." he sounded drained, despite his young age. Early leadership has clearly taken its toll on his spirit to fight.

"Oakstar always told me my mother was killed in a border fight over stolen prey. I was always so thankful to atleast still have him to watch over me," she mewed. Blizzardstar rested his head on his paws and sighed. She looked over to see that he had closed his eyes, clearly trying to go back to sleep.

Spottedrose rested her head on her paws and looked out through the hole in the trunk. She thought she could see Quickwater's gray face at the warrior den's entrance but she could not be sure. She would apologize to her in the morning.

With Blizzardstar to help her, maybe they could somehow show Oakstar that peace was what the clans needed to survive. She could feel herself relaxing against Blizzardstar's side, her pelt finally starting to dry. Eventually, the soft patter of rain on the trunk finally lulled her to sleep.

Chapter Eight {Edited}

A few days passed without Oakstar launching an attack on IceClan. The clans were tense but it seemed like the Breezeclan leader must be plotting something far worse than Blizzardstar had thought. Border patrols returned with scratches and missing patches of fur, but that was clearly from the rising tensions between them.

I don't think Oakstar's warriors know what to do, Blizzardstar thought to himself. He had already spoken to his warriors about his views on the situation. He told them he would prefer that they try and prevent any fighting, rather then entice it. No one really seemed to be disappointed. Wildflight had agreed that the forest would be better off if they all lived in peace.

Blizzardstar was just greatful to have Spottedrose to help convince them. She agreed that without the need for battle, their friends and loved ones should live much longer, fuller lives. Blizzardstar was even starting to find himself eager to spend time with Spottedrose. Any time their duties allowed them to cross paths, he felt as though he was filled with butterflies.

This morning, Blizzardstar was helping Wildflight organize the daily patrols. Redfern, the fluffy orange she-cat, was leading a border patrol around the far edge of the forest. While Webstripe, Goldensky, Meadowshine, and Stormpaw were going hunting deep into Iceclan's pine forest.
He had wanted to make sure Spottedrose was not given a patrol. He wanted to take her to hunt by the Ancient Birch. The enormous, towering tree was usually always teeming with all kinds of prey.

As Wildflight finished, Blizzardstar turned to her and meowed, "I'm taking Spottedrose and Quickwater hunting." She just nodded casually and continued on her way to giving the left over apprentices some duties around camp.

Quickwater, who was only sitting a few mouse lengths away, padded over as Wildflight departed. "I heard you want me for

hunting," she mewed as she approached, "I'm getting a bit too old to stalk as quick and quiet as you."

Blizzardstar flicked his tail, narrowing his eyes. "You are still young." he insisted.

As soon as Spottedrose appeared, they left for their hunting patrol. The Ancient Birch was a little bit of a hike away from camp, but the area was lush and full of juicy prey. "I'm used to catching snow hares." Spottedrose murmured softly, feeling embarrassed in her lack of hunting skills.

Quickwater flicked her tail, "hunting weasels and squirrels is easy." she scoffed. Blizzardstar knew that Spottedrose would learn quickly, she was thin and nimble. She had the perfect traits to hunt in the pine forest. "You'll get the hang of it in no time." He meowed, agreeing with Quickwater.

Blizzardstar could see the shadow of the wide trunk through the slender pine trees ahead, making him break into a sprint. Even though it hadn't snowed in a couple moons now, there were still scant patches of it here and there. The snowy white leader dove into a small clump, letting it cover his pelt in tiny pricks of cold.

"I don't know how you can do that," Spottedrose giggled as she finally caught up. He peeked out from the snow, his eyes slitted. "Well sometimes the best prey is caught when you're hiding in a clump of snow." he pointed out, his whiskers twitching.

Quickwater padded past, flicking her tail. "We won't catch any prey if you just goof around." she meowed over her shoulder. Shimmerpelt mrrowed with laughter and bounded after the gray tabby she-cat. Polarstar quickly leaped out of the snow mound and ran after them.

The ground all around the Birch was void of snow, grass and dirt taking its place. "Usually the ground is thick with snow here." Polarstar meowed as he swept his tail around to indicate the expanse of dirt and shrubs. The tall tree stood alone in a clearing, without smaller pine and sycamores to block the path of snow.

"The last snow we had was before the battle with Breezeclan. The one where Lilybloom was killed," Quickwater meowed softly next to Blizzardstar. He shrugged it off, he knew it was bound to snow again eventually.

"Well we should probably go ahead and start hunting, right." Spottedrose asked innocently. Blizzardstar flicked his tail tip against her side, glancing at her out of the corner of his eye.

"Go ahead, just bring anything you catch back to this spot." he mewed. In those moments, Quickwater had already padded away to begin her hunt. Spottedrose stalked away as soon as Blizzardstar was silent. She must be eager to prove her worth to her companions. Blizzardstar sat there for a few more long seconds before standing and padding onto the grassy surface. He hoped to catch some juicy prey to take back to his clan.

~~
Spottedrose looked down at her pile of prey, feeling quite pleased with how much she had caught since they started. Quickwater's pile was about the same size, while Blizzardstar's was a couple pieces smaller.

She felt like Blizzardstar was preoccupied, something seemed to be troubling him. She padded over to him, hoping to see what might be on his mind. He was sitting next to his prey pile, staring out through the pine trees.

"I didn't realize we were so near to the border." Blizzardstar mewed quietly. Spottedrose could barely hear him over the sounds of birds and the rush of wind in the trees. He seemed to be staring out through the edge of the forest. She looked through the trees and saw the rolling hills of her home, beginning in the distance. She could see a red smear of pelt color against the tree line.

"I think that's Foxstreak," Spottedrose mewed hopefully as she started to quickly trot over to the border. Blizzardstar followed a little more slowly, his pelt starting to bristle. As he caught up at the border, he could hear Spottedrose speaking worriedly with the rusty red she-cat, Foxstreak.

"Oakstar has grown very cold and.. different, since you left." Foxstreak mewed, her eyes round with fear. "He only wants us to train for battle, if we are seen hunting when we should be training he gets real angry." she whispered, casting glances back to the hillside as she spoke.

"A life of endless battle does that to a leader." Blizzardstar meowed as he came to stand beside Spottedrose.

"I don't understand how a cat as wise as Oakstar could be wrong!" the red she-cat meowed angrily. Spottedrose touched her with a paw, "Blizzardstar has had his fill of battle and blood shed. He wants peace for his kin and his warriors. That' something I wish Oakstar had wished for me when I was a kit."

Foxstreak bowed her head sadly, hunching her shoulders. "But Oakstar is wise and noble! How can I believe he has led us wrong this whole time!" she wailed.

Blizzardstar looked at the sobbing she-cat, his heart pricking with sympathy. "Battle and blood shed has been a part of the forest for many seasons before even Oakstar and myself," he pointed out, "after all, my father made my mother battle in the bloodiest fight our lands have ever seen. I wish they were still alive today. That's something I hope won't have to happen agan."

Foxstreak looked at him seriously, wariness shadowed in her gaze, "I also want peace for my clanmates." she whispered. Blizzardstar took a few steps closer, letting his tail touch against Foxstreak's paw.

"I want to help you," he began slowly, "but it will take some time to convince my warriors to help you. They think they will all be killed, by Oakstar and his followers." Foxstreak glanced anxiously back towards her camp before speaking to Blizzardstar once more, "I can try and see if any of my clanmates feel the same as I do. Maybe we can all talk to him, and change his mind" she mewed hastily.

"Go, return to our camp," Spottedrose urged her, "we will try and bring some clanmates to help, maybe in the coming moons."

Foxstreak began to protest, "a few moons is too long..." but Blizzardstar and Spottedrose were already racing away back into the forest. Spottedrose took one last glance back at her friend before she was swallowed by pine trees in the distance.

Chapter Nine {Edited}

Blizzardstar and Spottedrose hurried back to camp, leaving Quickwater to collect the fresh kill. Urgency lent speed to their paws, there was barely any time to chat before they were bursting through the camp entrance.

Wildflight was there in a blink, hovering at Blizzardstar's side. "What is going on?" she asked curiously, noticing that the pair seemed exhausted from their run.

Blizzardstar quickly collected himself and swept his tail around Wildflight's side as he started to pad towards his den. "Spottedrose and I must speak with you, before I speak with the clan." he mewed hastily as he stopped at the entrance to his den. The hollow tree could barely contain the three warriors but in moments, they were alone in the stuffy den.

"We met Foxstreak on the border," Blizzardstar began slowly, "she says that Oakstar is growing crazy, now that Spottedrose is gone."

"They are afraid for their safety." Spottedrose added, her eyes dark with worry. "Foxstreak is very loyal. I could only see her saying something like that if things have truly gone terribly wrong." she mewed. Wildflight nodded, taking in what the former Breezeclan warrior had to say. She took a couple heartbeats before finally meowing, "well surely that just means you should go back?"

Spottedrose shuffled her paws, "that is an option, but we were thinking we could try and talk to him again about peace between us." Wildflight shook her head, "we tried that last time and he almost attacked Blizzardstar!" Her brown fur rippled over her lean muscles.

Blizzardstar butted in, his voice strong and commanding, "we will visit BreezeClan with a patrol in a moon or so, and see if we may talk of peace." He watched Wildflight, noticing how she seemed like she wanted to protest. But, she stayed silent with a small, slight

nod.

Spottedrose purred, brushing against his side. "Surely Oakstar will rethink living peacefully when he sees how great we can work together. I'm sure there are others who would agree." her eyes shined as she glanced at Blizzardstar.

He felt his fur burn under her gaze. He knew it was true that he and Spottedrose worked well together. Perhaps he even was starting to really enjoy her company, but he would not admit it. He wasn't sure what to say. Hiding his emotions was something he was used to doing by now.

Wildflight turned to leave, her tail flicking with frustration as she exited the hollow tree. Blizzardstar knew he should talk to his deputy about this more, but Spottedrose was looking at him with a pleased expression.

"There was a time that I wouldn't hesitate to go and attack Breezeclan," Blizzardstar mewed softly, "my clan is still wary to the thought of peace."

Shimmerpelt flicked her tail, "surely they must listen to you, though. You may be young but your paws are guided by StarClan." she mewed happily. Her tail whisked around to brush against Blizzardstar's paw. His heart skipped a beat at how close her words were to the truth. But, she couldn't possibly know about his dream with Mudstar so many nights ago.

"Aren't all leaders' paws guided by StarClan? Breezeclan will follow his orders, even if they are to wipe my clan out of the forest once and for all." he slumped his shoulders and sighed sadly. Spottedrose pressed closer against him, her calico fur entangling with his frosty white pelt.

"I will never let Oakstar hurt you." she whispered. Blizzardstar laughed lightly, looking at her with amusement. "So I guess we are both protecting each other now." he purred.

She rested her head on his shoulder, closing her eyes lightly. She could almost picture a perfect life, where her father wanted to live

in peace with their neighbors. There were no battles and no one argued over land or prey. She thought she could even see herself enjoying time with Blizzardstar. Maybe one day she could even dare to be his mate. She decided that was what she wanted, most of all.

~~

The next morning was cold and cruddy, but Blizzardstar was determined not to forget his task again. He had been preoccupied the previous night with the clan meeting, which ended surprisingly smoothly. But now, Quietstorm's kits, Applekit and Sweetkit, were nearly six and a half moons old. He knew he had neglected them, they should have been made apprentices as soon as they were six moons old.

I can't keep letting myself get so distracted, he thought inwardly. As he exited his musky den, he turned and clawed his way up the bark and onto a small branch. "Let all cats old enough to feel the snow sting their paws, gather for a clan meeting!" he yowled. Almost instantly, Quietstorm appeared at the nursery along with Applekit and Sweetkit.

The white and black splotched she-cat was still trying to groom her kits' pelts, but they were trying to wiggle away from her. Softgaze sat near the fresh kill pile with her apprentice, Brokenpaw. The two she-cats looked like they had only just woken up. Pearlfang was also already awake, resting in a weak ray of early sunlight.

Soon, the elders appeared from their den. Timberstrike was leading the small group, his green eyes shining as he looked up at Blizzardstar. Behind him came Reedfur, who was gently leading Hawkslash from the den. Blizzardstar could feel his stomach twist with grief at the sight of the brown tabby warrior. Tinypool had been right that his eyes would not mend. He saw Reedfur whisper something in his ear before they sat down next to Timberstrike and some other warriors. It seemed the warriors had started to wake up and exit the den while Blizzardstar was watching Hawkslash.

Deep down, he still wanted revenge for his clanmate, but he knew that he was better off just forgetting about it. He took a deep breath, preparing to begin the ceremony."This fine morning, we have gathered together to make Quietstorm's two kits into

apprentices," he called out loudly, "Applekit and Sweetkit, please step forward."

The two kits hopped around excitedly for a second before scampering forward to the base of Blizzardstar's tall tree. In a blink, he leapt down to stand beside the kits. He touched his paw to Applekit's muzzle, feeling his claw tips graze her cream and brown fur. "From this day forward, you will be known as Applepaw," he mewed proudly, placing his paw back down on the ground, "your mentor will be Sootsplash!"

Sootsplash purred as he approached, "thank you, Blizzardstar. I will mentor my sister's kit well." Blizzardstar nodded, letting his gaze travel over Sootsplash's white and black spotted pelt. He looked almost exactly like Quietstorm.

Applepaw bounced away behind Sootsplash as he went to sit beside Quietstorm. Now it was Sweetpaw's turn. Once again, Blizzardstar lifted his paw and let it gently rest on Sweetpaw's muzzle. The tiny calico shivered but she looked determined. "From this day forward, you will be known as Sweetpaw! Your mentor will be Goldensky," he meowed, knowing the pair would work well as a team. The pretty golden brown she-cat quickly strode forward and touched her nose to Sweetpaw's forehead. "We are going to leave to explore the borders in a moment." Goldensky eagerly promised the tiny apprentice.

The two new apprentices scampered off towards the apprentice's den, quickly disappearing into the tall stems. Sootsplash padded over to Goldensky, discussing a possible joint patrol to explore the territory. Preforming ceremonies always had the ability to calm his nerves. It seemed that since they saw Foxstreak on the border, Blizzardstar had become more stressed. It seemed almost impossible to convince Oakstar to believe that peace was right for the clans. But Blizzardstar was starting to wonder if he truly wanted peace as well.

He wished Mudstar had been able to tell him more in his dream. Even just to visit him again, but his dreams were empty and filled with darkness. He wasn't sure if StarClan had abandoned him or not. Maybe I'm choosing the wrong path, he thought suddenly.

Maybe it all doesn't even matter.

Blizzardstar had turned away as the cats were breaking up. Spottedrose was padding over to him from her place among the other warriors, her expression unreadable. "I wish I could go back to see Bearpaw." she meowed quietly as she sat next to him. Blizzardstar let his tail run down her spine, hoping to calm her. "Don't worry, soon we will go back to Breezeclan. Hopefully we will bring peace to Oakstar and your clan mates."

Spottedrose closed her eyes and pressed closer into Blizzardstar's pelt. He felt almost certain, he had to be choosing the right path. He had to do this, for his Clan and for Spottedrose.

Chapter Ten {Inserted}

The morning was cold and windy, storm torn clouds dotted the blue sky. Tinypool had just woken to another troubling dream. It seemed her ears were filled with whispers but the path ahead was too dark and shadowed to see anything. It always ended the same, with a shining light appearing at the end. It expanded until she was blinded from it's brightness. She knew that their ancestors were trying to reach out to her, she just wished she knew what they were trying to say.

She quickly shook out her fur as she stood from her nest. She must not let this spook her. Tinypool knew she had put off talking to Blizzardstar about her dreams for too long. He deserved to know that their ancestors needed to speak with them.

She strode from her den in a flash, crossing towards Blizzardstar's den from her massive split rock. "Blizzardstar?" she called politely, asking to enter his den. He meowed softly, signaling to her that she could enter. As she passed inside the hollow pine trunk, she was surprised to find Spottedrose there as well. She was lounging in a second moss nest in the corner.

"I wasn't aware that you were allowing Spottedrose to share your den." Tinypool mewed casually, a disapproving look in her blue eyes. Blizzardstar shrugged quickly, clearly not finding it a big deal.

"I just wanted to make sure she is comfortable." he insisted. Tinypool could see Spottedrose's fur spiking with embarrassment. She didn't want to think of what they may have been doing in here. They are both young, clearly they are just having fun, she thought to herself. It shouldn't be any business of mine to intrude on my leader's love interests.

This situation with Spottedrose was certainly odd. She wasn't sure if she should disapprove. The fact that she was BreezeClan made her feel that this could not be right. "Well, I have come to talk to you about a private matter." she meowed softly. Blizzardstar turned to

Spottedrose and flicked his tail. "Maybe you can go ask Wildflight if there's anything you can do around camp." he meowed kindly.

She stood up and quickly padded out of her nest. She dipped her head to Tinypool and Blizzardstar as she exited the den. As soon as she had left, Blizzardstar's interest turned to his medicine cat. "What did you need to speak to me about?" he asked seriously.

"I've been having strange dreams," she meowed, "I think they're from StarClan." She didn't think she could even remember her last dream she had from their ancestors. Maybe she had never had one? She couldn't be sure, but she knew that this new omen meant danger.

"I am always in a very dark, eerie forest. I look down a well trod path, and I see a bright shining light at the end." Thinking about it now seemed odd. She wasn't sure what StarClan was trying to tell her. She watched Blizzardstar's expression closely. He almost looked startled at what she was telling her.

"That sounds all too familiar to me," he rasped, "I also had a dream. It wasn't recently, but Mudstar was passing me a message. One of the things he happened to say to me was that there was a light, hidden among the darkness."

Tinypool gasped, surprised by this sudden connection between dreams. "When did you have this dream? You should have came to me to discuss its meaning!"

Blizzardstar flicked his tail, becoming a little irritable. "I believe I am capable enough to handle this omen on my own." he meowed quietly. Tinypool flattened her ears, a growl rising in her throat. "Then why am I having these dreams? They obviously don't want you to deal with this by yourself!" she meowed desperately.

"Maybe not," he sighed, "but I can assure you that I know what we must do. Mudstar told me there needs to be peace in the forest for us to survive."

"Peace..." she echoed, running the idea through her thoughts. "Do you think there should be peace between our clans?" she asked

curiously. Even though Blizzardstar was still young, he had always been eager to battle.

"I'm not sure. I would really rather just go to Breezeclan and kill Oakstar myself. But I don't think that's what Mudstar wants me to do." He meowed, thinking hard. It was almost natural to be calm and collected around Spottedrose but he still felt vile hatred towards Oakstar.

"Did Mudstar say anything else, other than the light?" She asked suddenly, inching closer to her leader's side. She watched him close his eyes as he tried to remember his dream.

"He said a storm was coming. That we must form bonds or be forever lost in darkness." He meowed quietly, opening his eyes again to look at Tinypool.

"Are you trying to form bonds with Spottedrose?" She asked, thinking this would explain his peculiar behavior towards the she-cat.

"I wasn't intending to. But I really do think she is meant to be here. Maybe she is the light that was hidden in the darkness." He meowed, hoping Tinypool might agree.

"It's possible," she murmured, "we will need to keep an eye out for any more messages." She still felt disappointed that Blizzardstar had not come to her before with his dream. But now that they had talked it out, she didn't feel so confused.

"Are you still planning to visit Oakstar and see if he will welcome peace to the forest?" She asked after several moments. It made perfect sense now, why he had been so persistent in changing Oakstar's mind.

"Yes. If I can get him to accept peace we won't need to ever lose lives over battle again. We can keep to ourselves and live long, happy lives." He meowed, thinking about how much his life would change if he could convince Oakstar.

He would never see another clanmate die at the claws of an enemy

warrior. He would get to live his life and have a mate and kits, without worrying about their safety. He wondered if Spottedrose would want to stay with him or return to Breezeclan. Inwardly, he hoped she would want to stay.

"You aren't alone in this anymore," Tinypool mewed softly, "please come to me if you receive anymore dreams."

Blizzardstar nodded, "I will be sure to come to you with any more information." He promised. She could tell he still seemed slightly annoyed. But the Clan's survival was more important than his pride. She still felt disappointed that he had not come to her before.

"Well, I'll return to my den now." She mewed slowly, eyeing Blizzardstar suspiciously. He looked like he had already lost his focus, staring into the corner of the den behind her.

"Goodbye Blizzardstar." She muttered, knowing he probably wasn't paying attention to hear her. She could feel her emotions swirling; angry at Blizzardstar for his negligence and impatience with her ancestors.

How could she hope to help Blizzarstar decipher the omen if they wouldn't share with her? As she slid from the entrance to his den she felt her fur prickle. Spottedrose was watching her from across the clearing.

As she quickly padded back over to her den, she felt her fears ebb a tiny bit. She decided that Blizzardstar wasn't on his own after all. It seemed that Starclan had sent him that confusing she-cat for some reason. But Tinypool realized she couldn't answer her question, why had they sent her in the first place?

Chapter Eleven {Edited}

The clan continued to grow even more restless as the days carried on. They were growing scared of their unpredictable neighbors. They felt at any moment certain war would unfold in the forest. They upheld Blizzardstar's wishes of no fighting the best that they could.

Spottedrose was also getting impatient, she longed to visit her clan.

"Blizzardstar, is today the day that we venture to BreezeClan?" Spottedrose mewed softly from her padded nest next to Blizzardstar's. The snowy white tom was sitting close by. He had been woken early by terrible nightmares, something he had clearly not expected.

"Maybe." he meowed, hoping she would just forget about it for now. The more dangerous the situation became, the more he wished to just keep her out of it.

"You can't keep me here." she huffed, curling into an even tighter ball in her nest. He looked at her with a baffled expression, "I'm not keeping you anywhere. You can leave anytime you'd like." he pointed out gently.

He didn't want to argue about this again. He knew he didn't have anything to say to satisfy her need to visit her true home.

"Maybe you should just go today." a familiar voice mewed from just outside Blizzardstar's den. It was Tinypool. He could tell from her expression that she was troubled. But with Spottedrose there, Blizzardstar knew that Tinypool would stay silent.

He shuffled his paws, feeling his frustration growing more severe. "What would Oakstar say, when he saw you?" he asked skeptically. He hoped she would understand how he felt about the situation. She looked down at the soft moss lining her nest. "Maybe he would just be happy to see me again." she whispered.

Blizzardstar didn't know if that was the case. As soon as Oakstar would see her, he would be outraged! He had told them to stay away and never come back. He could already imagine it now, Oakstar bearing down on top of him snapping for his throat.

"Let's just go today. If it seems like things are going badly we can just leave." she begged, her voice light but pleading. He looked down at her, wishing he could just avoid all of this and just stay here in his den with her.

"I guess we can go." he mewed reluctantly. She jumped up almost instantly, her eyes shining happily.

"I'll organize a patrol to escort us to the camp." he mewed, shooting an angry look at Tinypool who was still sitting near the mouth of the den. As he exited, she dared to follow him.

"You can't keep her from Oakstar," the medicine cat chided him, "BreezeClan is her home. Oakstar knows what's best for her."

Blizzardstar kept his mouth shut, foreboding coursing all throughout his body. He knew this meeting would only end in trouble.

~~
It was only a little past sunhigh. The small patrol was just leaving the tree cover on IceClan territory. Wildflight padded close to Spottedrose while Meadowshine and Elkleap brought up the rear.

BreezeClan's border markers were tinged with fear and anger. Blizzardstar wrinkled his nose as he detected Oakstar's scent. It was the strongest among the rest.

It seemed like the BreezeClan leader patrolled this border often. The thought made Blizzardstar's pelt prickle but he stayed silent as they slowly trudged on across BreezeClan territory.

After several long minutes of walking, they encountered a patrol hunting for prey. Foxstreak was there, with Coldwind and Willowleaf. The three cats turned to Blizzardstar's patrol, their hackles rising threateningly.

Spottedrose eagerly padded over to Foxstreak, her eyes happily shining at seeing her friend again. "We have finally come, to talk with Oakstar!" she meowed before anyone could utter a single word.

Foxstreak held back her clanmates with her lifted tail, looking at them seriously. "We will take them back to camp." she mewed sternly. But the white tom, Coldwind, was already stalking forwards towards Blizzardstar.

"Don't you think Oakstar would be pleased if we brought him the pelt of Blizzardstar! Maybe then he would finally relax and stop acting so flea brained!" he hissed. Foxstreak leapt forward and planted her paw on his tail, halting him.

"What do you think they're here for!" she snarled. Coldwind flattened his ears and padded back to Willowleaf's side. The cream she-cat was silent, looking neither approving nor disapproving.

Foxstreak turned her hopeful gaze to the IceClan leader. "I really hope you manage to speak some sense into Oakstar. Many of my fellow warriors wish for the violence to stop." She meowed.

Blizzardstar dipped his head to the BreezeClan warriors. "I do not want to harm your leader or your clan mates," he meowed, "I just wish for us to live in harmony. We owe it to our kin to live in peace." To his relief, Willowleaf and Coldwind were nodding in agreement.

"I have seen my parents both slaughtered in battle," Coldwind grunted, "if peace will stop all this death, maybe you are just what this forest needs." Blizzarstar was surprised by the tom's emotion. Clearly even the prickliest BreezeClan warriors wanted this nonsense to end.

He started to lead his small patrol again, behind the slow but steady Foxstreak and her warriors. Spottedrose tried to get close to Coldwind and Willowbreeze, but they would pull ahead whenever she got close. Their coldness towards Spottedrose surprised Blizzardstar. He figured after their struggles they would forgive her for her mistakes.

Deep down, he supposed it was just Oakstar's influence that made them that way. Eventually, they reached the BreezeClan camp and the three BreezeClan warriors disappeared into the entrance.

"I guess we should enter." Wildflight murmured, her pelt starting to prickle along her spine. Elkleap brought up the rear again as they entered the camp.
Almost immediately, Oakstar's strong commanding voice echoed across the camp.

"Blizzardstar, what are you doing here in my camp, again?" he sounded more pleased than angry.

Blizzardstar dipped his head to the brown tabby, trying to look as calm as possible. "We have come once again to speak of peace between our clans." he meowed, loud enough for all the cats in the clearing to hear.

A lot of the BreezeClan warriors looked around hopefully. They were clearly growing tired of Oakstar's battle hungry lifestyle that he enforced so strongly. Oakstar laughed, his voice booming in the chilly air.

"Our clans will never have peace as long as you and I walk these lands!" Oakstar growled.

The large tabby leader had stood and was slowly padding towards Blizzardstar. Spottedrose could feel the impending fight, and stepped around Blizzardstar to face her father.

"Our kin deserve to have peace in this forest," she mewed hesitantly, "I don't want to see them die in pointless battles, like so many of our clanmates."
Oakstar stared at his daughter, his eyes void or any emotion. He raises a paw to swipe at her, his claws extended to their full length. Blizzardstar pushed her out of the way as quickly as he could as Oakstar's claws slashed the air just inches from his face. In a moment of pure rage, Blizzardstar bared his teeth at Oakstar with a viscous snarl.

Everything following that moment happened very quickly. It almost

seemed unreal. In a flash, Oakstar vaulted over Spottedrose and slammed Blizzardstar into the ground. He was instantly knocked unconscious as his head smacked the ground. Elkleap gasped in surprise as Wildflight flung herself on top of the BreezeClan leader.

"Get off of him!" Spottedrose shrieked. Her gaze shot around the clearing, trying to find any cat that would step forward to stop their leader. No one moved. In a panic, she started to score her claws down Oakstar's pelt, to no avail. As he floated in and out of consciousness, Blizzardstar could vaguely feel his pelt being raked into bloody shreds. His breathing was becoming rapid and shallow.

Then the weight lifted and he could faintly hear Oakstar gasping for breath somewhere nearby. Wildflight unhooked herself and jumped back from the BreezeClan leader. Her claws were dripping with Oakstar's blood.

"You've truly gone mad!" She gasped, looking down at Blizzardstar's unmoving body. "Do you really want to lose everyone you love to this pointless fate?" She wailed.

"Get out of my camp." he rasped. Wildflight and Elkleap turned to frantically pick up Blizzardstar. With their leader perched atop their shoulders, Wildflight and Elkleap glanced back for one more moment before they raced from the camp. Spottedrose locked eyes with Wildflight, clearly shocked beyond belief.

"Don't worry, Blizzarstar! We are getting you back to Tinypool!" Wildflight meowed hastily as they shot out of the camp entrance and up the steep valley. All he could remember after that was hearing Spottedrose's anguished wailing as they pelted away from the BreezeClan camp.

Chapter Twelve {Edited}

Wildflight and Elkleap kept running, supporting Blizzardstar on their shoulders the best they could. "Should we have left Shimmerpelt back there?" Elkleap gasped. He was growing tired from their frantic escape.

"It doesn't matter! We need to get Blizzardstar to Tinypool!" Wildflight yowled. Her voice was tinged with fear for her leader.

In a matter of minutes, they had finally returned to the IceClan camp. Elkleap flopped onto the ground as soon as they set down Blizzardstar. His chest was heaving for air.

Wildflight paced around her leader, casting anxious glances at his unmoving body. "If he was losing a life, he should have woke back up by now..." she whispered. Her voice was quiet enough that no one would over hear her anxiety.

Tinypool must have been instantly alerted as soon as the group returned. She was now hurrying out of the huge split rock with a huge bundle of herbs in her mouth. She skidded over to Blizzardstar's side, dropping her herbs on the ground.

"He's lost so much blood," she gasped, "what happened?" Wildflight had composed herself a little. She was trying to hold together her growing fear so she wouldn't worry the clan.

"Oakstar was frantic after Spottedrose tried to talk to him! He leapt on Blizzardstar and tried to tear him apart." her voice cracked with emotion. She didn't know if she'd ever forget how quickly things had all turned sour.

"Where is Spottedrose?" a soft voice mewed nervously from behind them. Turning, Wildflight came to face her clan gathered around her.

Her heart seemed to sink in her chest. "We had to leave her

behind..." she choked, her shoulders sagging. Tinypool had returned to inspecting Blizzardstar. She was cleaning and treating his numerous slashes and tears in his pelt.

"He should have woken up by now." Tinypool muttered, prompting Wildflight to turn back to her leader.

"Does that mean he's... with StarClan?" she asked. She felt her heart beat quicken and her fur started to crawl uncomfortably. Tinypool shook her head, her white and gray spotted fur covered in Blizzardstar's drying blood.

"No, he is alive. His breathing is very shallow and his heartbeat is irregular. I'll need to take him to my den to watch over him." she meowed warily. Tinypool looked down at his tattered pelt, letting her tail brush over his ragged fur.

Hawkslash pushed forward from the crowd of cats that had gathered. His sightless eyes cast over the three cats in front of him. "I will help carry him to the medicine den," he grunted, "I wish I could have been there in BreezeClan today. I owe this to Blizzardstar."

Tinypool nodded without hesitation, standing back to let the blind elder struggle to support his leader.

Wildflight looked over at Elkleap, who had passed out on the ground a few rabbit hops away. "I think he's ok." she meowed. She knew that Tinypool needed to devote all of her time to healing their leader.

The medicine cat nodded and started to follow Hawkslash back to her den. "If he wakes up and has trouble breathing, be sure to send him to my den!" she called over her shoulder.

Wildflight didn't answer. She just watched as Hawkslash vanished into the medicine den. Blizzardstar's limp white tail was trailing in the grass behind them.

The clan slowly dispersed as the tragedy passed. A thick cloud of confusion and fear hung over every single warrior.

Oh Starclan, please watch over Blizzardstar and help guide him back to us. She hoped her ancestors would hear her plea and help their clan. She wasn't so sure what to expect as she stared at the dusky sky.

~~

Blizzardstar opened his eyes. He realized he was in a forest quite unfamiliar to him. He stood slowly, careful not to make any noise. The breeze was laced with the scent of many cats. This made Blizzardstar believe he was in a very foreign land.

"Hello?" he called out curiously. He wasn't sure if these cats would be hostile or friendly. But there was no response. Blizzardstar was left alone.

He sat there for a long while, trying to remember what had happened and how he had gotten here. He could remember Spottedrose's anguished shrieking. It made his pelt spike all over at the memory. But why was she so upset? What had happened?

He bent to groom his shining white fur to try and rid his uneasy feeling. Suddenly, a sparkling orange pelt approached him from the shadows.

"Blizzardstar, you should not be here." the unfamiliar she-cat meowed. Her pelt emitted a powerful light, allowing Blizzardstar to look clearly at his surroundings.

A thick fog laced across the ground, dark gray and swirling. Blizzardstar couldn't even see his own paws. Dense patches of overgrown shrubs and skeletal trees grew close together and in all directions.

The strange she-cat seemed out of place here. Her pelt was shining with health and her eyes alight with curiosity. "Then where am I supposed to be?" he asked carefully, not wanting to frighten her away.

"Follow me." she mewed as she turned around and vanished into the mist. Blizzardstar grunted and fled after her, straining his eyes to see her orange pelt throughthe fog

They ran on and on, across swamps and over fallen dead logs. Shrieks and yowls drifted to the two cats through the bare trees. The sound made Blizzardstar's pelt tingle with fear. What was this place?

Then he heard something! A frantic beating of huge paw steps in the fog behind them. "Something's chasing us!" Blizzardstar yowled. His heart felt like it had jumped into his throat.

The scent was vaguely familiar for some reason. Blizzardstar braved a glance backwards to see a pair of gleaming eyes burning into his own. They look like my eyes, he thought as he turned his head forward again.

Then they burst through a wall of bushes, out into a star lit clearing. Blizzardstar collapsed instantly. His chest was heaving from their long run. He looked back up at the bushes, but the gleaming eyes were gone.

"I'm glad you are fast. We almost didn't escape." the strange she-cat mewed as she stepped over Blizzardstar's flank. She was padding back to the bush. She was sniffing at the branches near the bottom that were thick with thorns.

"You were only able to escape because your heart is still pure. If you were evil, like them, these thorns would have stopped you." she turned to look at him. She seemed curious as to how he would react to this information.

"My heart is pure...?" He asked, not sure what she meant. Then he recognized her. It had been season upon season since he had last seen her but she looked exactly the same.

"Darkrose, is that you?" he asked, his voice shrinking to a kit sized squeak. She purred, padding back over to his side. She brushed her muzzle against his cheek. Her achingly familiar scent washed over him.

"I'm sure you didn't expect to see your littermate again so soon." she whispered. Her hushed voice seemed to fill the whole clearing.

"Does that mean I'm in Starclan?" he asked. His eyes grew wide. She shook her head quickly, hoping he wasn't going to get upset. "You're not dead, but you're body has taken quite a clawing back in BreezeClan. But with your soul fighting to walk two different paths, you must choose before you return to your home."

Blizzardstar's felt like his paws were frozen solid. He had to make a choice? He could remember Mudstar had said in his dream that he must make the right choice. Was that now?

Then he remembered the pair of familiar eyes chasing them through the foggy forest. "That cat chasing us, that was Frozensky, right?"

He didn't know why his sister wouldn't have wanted to stop and let him speak with their father again. She looked at him sympathetically, her tail brushing his pelt.

"I have chosen a different path than our father. To be honest, most of our clanmates hunt in the Dark Forest." she meowed. She was staring hard at the thorn bush at the edge of the clearing.

All of this new information shot around in Blizzardstar's head. It was almost making him feel sick. Darkrose pressed against him, feeling his sudden shift in emotion.

"So, all this battle and blood shed really has corrupted us..." he whispered. He could feel his heart breaking for his father and all the other countless generations of his clanmates that were left to wander in that dark forest.

"But you can change things!" she insisted, licking his shoulder. He flinched away, feeling his pelt burn from her touch.

"I need to be alone." he whispered as he turned away and padded into the starry forest. This can't be happening, he thought in despair as he wandered on, alone, into the shadows.

Chapter Thirteen {Inserted}

Tinypool was awake the whole night. She was too afraid to sleep. Everytime she closed her eyes she feared that she would open them to find Blizzardstar dead. His condition was very puzzling. She was not sure she had ever heard of a condition that left its victim in this sort of dream-like state.

Her attention snapped to the den entrance where she could hear a few of the warriors pacing outside. She could detect Wildflight's scent stronger than the others. A weak ray of dawn light slanted through the den entrance, illuminating the space around her. She glanced back over at Blizzardstar, to be sure that he was still breathing.

Her heart fluttered in her chest with panic as she noticed his flank wasn't moving. "Oh, Starclan!" she exclaimed as she rushed back over to his side. She could hear her heart thumping in her ears as she frantically scanned over his body. To her relief, he was breathing. I think I'm losing it, she thought to herself as she turned to look out the entrance again.

She realized that she could no longer hear anyone pacing. Wildflight's strong fear scent had also dissapeared. Tinypool glanced one more time back at her leader before daring to poke her head out of her rock. To her surprise, the warriors had gathered around in a large circle. She craned her neck to try and see what they had gathered around. It looked like a black and silver cat, and the scent was BreezeClan!

"What is going on?" Tinypool gasped as she trotted up to the nearest warrior. It was Aspenclaw, the well muscled brown and white tom. His eyes were wide with excitement as he looked over at her. "The dawn patrol caught Hailstorm sniffing around on our side of the border! They brought him back here to punish him for what BreezeClan has done to Blizzardstar!" he almost sounded pleased, it made Tinypool's heart stop with dread.

She quickly turned, leaving Aspenclaw to stare after her in confusion. She searched the tight gathered ring of cats, hoping to find Wildflight in the fray. To her relief, she spotted the she-cat's dirty brown pelt. Slipping through the crowd like a trout in the river, she appeared at the deputy's side. "You need to take control of this, some cats are talking nonsense!" she hissed.

Wildlfight looked dazed, staring through the crowd at Hailstorm. Tinypool huffed in exasperation. She angrily pushed through the crowd to stand at Hailstorm's side. She turned to look at Wildflight, but spoke to the whole of the clan. "Stop! Don't you remember what Blizzardstar told you? We will only survive if we seek peace, not war!" She looked around at her clanmates desperately, hoping to see signs of anyone agreeing with her.

Wildflight pushed through the crowd to come and face Tinypool. "Blizzardstar wanted peace and now he is practically on his way to join StarClan. Clearly peace is not the way." she meowed softly. Tinypool nudged her with a paw, trying to get the deputy to look her in the eyes. This isn't hopeless, Tinypool thought. The forest needs peace.

She could feel the gazes of her clanmates on her pelt. "We can not hold Hailstorm accountable for his Clan's actions." She stopped for a moment and took a deep breath. She couldn't believe she was about to say this, but she knew she had to.

"This was foretold to me and Blizzardstar. We both had a dream, so similar and vivid that it must have been dreams from StarClan," she meowed. Many of the warriors gasped in shock. She could hear Brokenpaw's tiny voice near the back, "oh wow! Dreams from StarClan!"

"It seems that our ancestors has finally reached out to send us this message. Blizzardstar first had it a little more than a moon ago. He told me that Mudstar had come to him in a dream and told him that if the Clans wanted to survive we must live in peace!" she meowed loudly. She heard Hailstorm breathing heavily beside her.

"You've really had dreams with StarClan?" he whispered. She nodded slowly, turning away from him to look at Wildflight.

Tinypool was relieved to find that she no longer looked defeated. "So that means we should let him go." Wildflight meowed firmly, finally willing to step up and take charge.

Hailstorm was shivering with relief next to her, a purr rising in his throat. Tinypool heard the others muttering their agreement that Hailstorm should go home unharmed. "I am extremely greatful to you all for allowing me to go home. I was sure that I was doomed as soon as your patrol found me." he meowed.

Wildflight turned to him with a serious expression. "Just one thing. What *were* you doing on our side of the border?" she asked. He shuffled his paws nervously, glancing between the two she-cats. "I was just trying to see if there was any trace of Blizzardstar's blood on the grass. Oakstar ordered me to see if he could still be alive." he mewed anxiously.

"Well you can help us out this time and tell Oakstar that Blizzardstar is dead and Wildstar is leader now." Tinypool meowed, locking eyes with Hailstorm. He nodded eagerly, "Yes, yes. I can do that!" he exclaimed.

"Good, now go back to your Clan in peace." Wildflight meowed, raising her tail for the warriors to let him pass. The crowd parted and dispersed, ready to be assigned duties for the morning. The dawn light had shifted to a morning sky, with small white clouds scattered overhead. Hailstorm quickly bounded away and through the camp entrance.

"I think I'm going to follow him." Tinypool meowed. Wildflight looked like she was about to object but just nodded instead. "Just be careful." she meowed.

Tinypool sped away through the entrance and followed the scent of Hailstorm on the grass. She caught up to him quickly, almost running into him. "Oops, I'm sorry." she mumbled as he reared in surprise. "You nearly scared my pelt off!" he growled.

"I just needed to talk with you more about this. My clanmates are too impulsive, out here I can explain this to you better." she meowed quickly. Hailstorm looked a little wary, but nodded after a

pause.

"Blizzardstar and I really did have dreams from our ancestors. I know its been an incredibley long time since any cat has shared dreams with StarClan. But this is real, and the forest is depending on us to stop all this senseless fighting." she meowed, hoping she was making any sense to him.

"I believe you." he meowed seriously. Tinypool sighed with relief, her tail flicking happily, "I'm glad you are not as hard headed as Oakstar." Hailstorm flattened his ears defensively. "Oakstar has his reasons for being this way. I can't ask him to change, but I will follow him until the day I join StarClan."

Tinypool felt shocked by the strength of Hailstorm's loyalty. "You are a truly noble warrior." She commented kindly. He dipped his head to her and stood, turning to start his journey back to his camp.

"I'll try to keep Oakstar from destroying the forest," he meowed, "but whatever Blizzarstar is doing to fix this, try and hurry." She saw mixed emotions burning in his eyes. A strong loyalty towards his Clan and leader, but also a sort of dread.

"Everything will be ok!" Tinypool called as he sped away through the towering pine trees. She watched his black tail disappear into the distance before turning back towards her camp.

These bonds we form will help out both clans in the coming moons, she thought happily. She started to slowly pad back to camp. She noticed that the sun was still low on the horizon, there was still a whole day ahead yet.

She had almost forgot that Blizzardstar was still in her den as she padded through the camp entrance. She hurried across the clearing and over to her den. She slid through the crack in the rock and into the darkness. Blizzardstar was still asleep, still breathing.

With a sigh, she relaxed and sat back on her haunches. She curled her tail around so that it barely touched his side.

"Oh, Blizzardstar. I hope this is a part of StarClan's plan." She

meowed softly. Suddenly, she could hear someone approaching her den entrance.

"Are you in here Tinypool?" It was Wildflight. "Yes, come in." She meowed. The skinny brown she-cat slid into the den, her eyes wide with wonder.

"I can't believe you both shared dreams with Starclan!" She meowed in awe. Tinypool purred, nodding. "Yes, it was truly magical."

"Are they mad at us? We have fought for so long. It's hard to think that they've really wanted us to live a different way." Wildflight meowed anxiously.

"I'm not too sure," she confessed, "but they have to see that we are trying." She hoped that was true. Wildflight turned to leave. She was probably intending to lead a patrol now that she had been able to talk to Tinypool before she left.

"I just don't want to find any more BreezeClan cats on our side of the border." Wildflight meowed, light but with a hint of seriousness.

Tinypool flicked her tail, "I think Hailstorm will be sure that won't happen." She meowed. Wildflight just shrugged.

"Get well soon, Blizzarstar." She meowed towards his sleeping form before exiting the den. Tinypool looked back down at his snowy white pelt.

"Yes, get well soon." She breathed.

Chapter Fourteen {Edited}

The morning in BreezeClan was frustrating for Dewdrop. It had been a few days since Hailstorm returned from his dawn patrol to say that Blizzardstar had passed away from his injuries. He said he had encountered Wildstar on the border after she had gone to the Firestone to receive her nine lives.

The whole clan was buzzing with the news. Blizzardstar was finally dead! She had gone to visit Spottedrose early in the morning. The she-cat was still very distressed from Hailstorm's news.

"I can't believe what Oakstar did to Blizzardstar!" she growled as Dewdrop came to sit next to her in the camp clearing.

"Leaders fight all the time." the pretty silver medicine cat soothed. She didn't like Oakstar's unbreakable fury more than anyone else. But as medicine cat she must support him.

Spottedrose just huffed and turned her head, indicating she was done speaking. "Just try and perk up a little. You're back with your clan now." Dewdrop mewed as she turned to leave.

The medicine cat quickly trotted across the camp, heading towards Oakstar's den. Spottedrose had turned her head back around and watched her go. As she approached, she stuck her delicate nose inside and called, "Oakstar, I'm here to dress your scratches in new cobweb."

A soft meow welcomed Dewdrop into the cozy leader's den. Oakstar was lazily dozing in his nest. His mood had changed from angry and unpredictable to a very relaxed and almost smug nature since he had killed Blizzardstar.

Dewdrop sat next to Oakstar's nest, parting his fur in places so she could inspect his scratches. They all seemed healed, so she left them alone.

"I don't think you'll need any more herbs," she mewed softly, "if you feel any pain just come see me." Oakstar didn't seem to hear her, he was staring blankly out of the den entrance.

"Is something wrong, Oakstar?" Dewdrop asked hesitantly, hoping nothing new had invoked her leader's rage. He shook his head, pulling his tail tighter against him.

"Just thinking how IceClan shouldn't bother us again, since I killed Blizzardstar." his voice was gruff but had almost a mocking tone as he mentioned their enemies.

"Well, don't mention Blizzardstar around Spottedrose. She is still very upset about the whole situation." she scolded him, hoping he was listening this time.

He laughed, focusing his fiery green gaze with Dewdrop's. "Blizzardstar doesn't matter anymore. Now that Spottedrose is back in BreezeClan, she won't ever have to hear of him again..." his voice trailed off with a threatening growl. Dewdrop slowly backed away from him, towards the den entrance.

"I'm, uh... going to go gather herbs now.." she muttered, quickly turning and leaving Oakstar alone. She didn't stop to find any warriors to accompany her, but she looked back at the camp for a moment before vanishing through the entrance.

~~

Tinypool was sitting in her den, staring down at Blizzardstar's sleeping form. He still hadn't woken up in the days following his incident, and Tinypool was growing very worried.

Every day countless warriors visited the medicine den, eager to see their leader and ask if he was doing any better. It broke Tinypool's heart to see her clanmates, so torn without their young leader.

Wildflight was also finding it hard to adjust to her leadership duties. Almost every morning, in the pre dawn light, the medicine cat heard Wildflight visit Blizzardstar and sob quietly. She would whisper to him, asking him to get better and come back to the clan.

Tinypool moved away from Blizzardstar's side. She glanced at him one more time before hastily exiting the den. It was still early, so the only other cat awake was Wildflight. She was pacing urgently at the foot of Blizzardstar's tree. She was staring straight down at her paws as they wore a muddy track in the ground.

I'll just slip out real quick to get some herbs for Blizzardstar, Tinypool thought as she quickly trotted past Wildflight and out of camp. Away from her clanmates, Tinypool ran as fast as she could through the trees. It felt good to escape the morbid aura that has enveloped the camp.

She kept racing along, dodging swiftly around trees and bushes until she reached the edge of IceClan territory. She scented the approaching border markers and slowed, her heart thumping in her chest.

But as she looked out over the opposing territory, she spotted a silver pelt sniffing around a clump of grasses. "Dewdrop!" Tinypool called in a friendly tone. She hoped the other medicine cat wouldn't be hostile.

Dewdrop looked up from her herb hunt and let out a loud trill, quickly trotting over to the border. "Oh, Tinypool! I wasn't expecting to see you today." she mewed, her voice thick with nervousness.

"Oh, yes. I was just coming to look for some Lamb's Ear. It grows best on our border." she meowed, eyeing Dewdrop suspiciously. It felt like she was acting odd. Almost like she thought Tinypool was going to scold her.

"Is Wildstar dealing well with her new responsibilities," Dewdrop asked gently. Tinypool looked at the BreezeClan medicine cat thoughtfully. She didn't know if she should tell her the truth. But maybe Dewdrop could be an important connection to have, she thought to herself.

"Blizzardstar is not dead," she meowed after a long pause, "but there is something wrong with him. He fainted in your camp from his blood loss and hasn't woken up since."

Dewdrop slowly sat down. Her expression was guarded but curious. "It's been a few days, has he even moved at all? Like in his sleep?" she asked curiously.

Tinypool shook her head, "no, it is almost like he **is** dead, but he is still breathing and I can hear his heartbeat." Clearly this situation was something neither medicine cat thad encountered before.

"Atleast he is still alive. Spottedrose has been very stressed since this all happened." Dewdrop sighed, a little bit of her discomfort had vanished.

"I wouldn't blame her!" Tinypool growled, "coming with a calm patrol to speak of peace and watching another cat get torn to shreds!"

Dewdrop shrank back, flattening her ears. "But she is a BreezeClan warrior! She is where she belongs!" she insisted sadly, hoping for her equal to understand.

"Yeah, ok..." Tinypool muttered as she turned to leave. She was done speaking with this mouse brained BreezeClan cat! "Cats with views like your clan are why we are all doomed!" Tinypool yowled as she dissapeared back into the pine forest.

Dewdrop stared after her, feeling her pelt ruffle in agitation. "You're more doomed than I am!" she hissed as she whirled around and ran back towards camp.

Chapter Fifteen {Edited}

Blizzardstar was sitting quietly in that small starlit clearing. His back was turned to that scraggly thorn bush. He could hear his ancestors whispering to him from beyond its sharp branches. They were taunting him to step over and join them.

"I can't be like them..." he choked, digging his claws into the ground. He wanted Spottedrose and his clanmates to live peacefully! Not with battle and death being their normal routine.

"I knew you would grow to be a wise, noble warrior." a soft voice sounded from the forest in front of him. He squinted hard, trying to make out a shape through the dazzling trunks.
A furry all white she-cat padded forward, her pelt shimmering with starlight.

"I never had the chance to actually meet you. When your father forced me that day to fight I knew I wouldn't live to see you back in IceClan. I never wanted to fight and your father knew that. Some days he even felt the same way as me! But when you live in a clan surrounded by blood thirsty cats, it's hard to think differently." the white she-cat was staring at him intently. He hadn't noticed she was waiting for his response.

Blizzardstar was completely lost for words. He didn't even want to blink in fear that the she-cat would vanish before his eyes. "You're my mother..." he whispered. He looked at her with a deep sadness in his eyes.

Icestripe made my mother fight and I never got to see her because of his selfishness! Suddenly, he felt like he might be sick but he couldn't leave his mother here. He wasn't sure when he would encounter her again.

"Starclan is so empty, I wish I would have seen you before now. I would have been so proud to have you and Darkrose there for my nine lives ceremony,." he meowed. His voice was growing sad and

desperate. Thinking about it now, his father HAD been among the cats that had given him his nine lives. That could only mean one thing.

"Do we never even interact with Starclan? Not even the medicine cats?" he asked. He was scooting a little further away from the thorn bush to speak with the she-cat.

"We can usually commune with the medicine cats, but most others are lost to our presence." she meowed sadly, her shoulders sagging.

"Icestripe never even told me your name," Blizzardstar mumbled. He felt hollow with sadness as he thought of the life with his mother that he had been robbed of. He had never let it upset him before. But now his entire life was being turned upside down. How will I ever know what's right, he thought desperately.

"Oh, my name? My name is Snowpuddle." she mewed happily. She lether tail wrap around Blizzardstar's side as he moved even closer. He leaned into her, breathing hard so he could remember her scent in the future.

"You still have a long path ahead of you," she warned, "but I know you'll make the right decision, for Spottedrose and your kits."

Blizzardstar felt his pelt prickle at his mother's words. My kits? His heart started to race in his chest.

He turned to say something to Snowpuddle but she had vanished, her scent quickly fading. "No, wait! Come back," he wailed, staring hard through the trees to try and spot her white pelt.

"She left you," a voice sneered from somewhere beyond the thorn bush.

"It's your fault she left me so long ago!" Blizzardstar hissed angrily. He whirled around to face the thorn bush. Icestripe was laughing, clearly trying to taunt his son into joining him on the other side of the bush.

"Snowpuddle and Darkrose are weak! I know I raised you better than this." Icestripe growled. Blizzardstar could hear him pacing

close to the other side of the bush. His fur was snagging the leaves and branches as he passed.

I shouldn't be afraid of him, Blizzardstar thought as he took a step into the bush. He couldn't feel any thorns snagging his fur as he took a step into the murky fog of the Dark Forest.

In an instant, Icestripe appeared and was pressing close to Blizzardstar. He was steering him away from the safety of the bush. "I've been watching you, trying to speak of peace with Oakstar. I know I've told you before that BreezeClan are savages!" Icestripe growled. He shoved Blizzardstar into a nearby patch of long growing grasses.

"I'm just so tired of watching our clanmates die! Surely if we can prevent it, we should!" he grunted as he stood up and shook his pelt. Icestripe charged at him through the mist and raked his claws over his muzzle.

"Our clanmates give their lives for the safety of IceClan! I don't know why you would reject such a noble path!" Icestripe sneered. He watched while Blizzardstar rubbed a paw over his scratches.

He looked over at the thorn bush, not realizing that Icestripe had led him so far away. He started to inch back towards it, making sure to keep his eyes on Icestripe.

"Yes, go back over to Starclan. Be sure to tell Snowpuddle and Darkrose that I'm doing just fine over here!" he snarled. The angry tom's eyes flashed with longing at the mention of the she-cats, but it quickly disappeared. In a blink, Icestripe was leaping towards Blizzardstar.

Quickly, he raced back through the bush. He could hear the thud of Icestripe's paws as he landed just on the other side. He could faintly hear him hissing and snarling but he couldn't make out what he was saying.

To his dismay, Snowpuddle and Darkrose were nowhere to be seen. He was left alone, again. To be by himself with his dangerous and dreadful thoughts.

~~

Wildflight woke early, feeling unusually calm and collected. Ever since Blizzardstar fell ill, she had felt overworked and frantic. Like there was always more things that needed done.

She stood from her nest in the warriors den and started to pick her way outside. She was careful not to step on any paws or tails. Today, it was her duty to take Stormpaw, Weaselpaw, and Brokenpaw out to access their hunting and fighting skills.

She had wanted their warrior ceremonies to wait until Blizzardstar was well again. Sadly, she was starting to feel like that day might never come. She had told the apprentices the previous evening to wake early. She was satisfied to see them sitting peacefully near the camp entrance.

Stormpaw was sitting closest to the entrance. His dark gray fur was sleek and well groomed. Weaselpaw sat next to him. He almost looked like a brown weed with how much taller he was than his siblings. Last of all was Brokenpaw, the delicate black and brown spotted she-cat. She always looked dainty and underwhelming compared to her brothers. But her speed and cunning nature made her an equally formidable opponent.

"Let's get a move on!" Wildflight purred as she padded past Stormpaw and out the entrance. The apprentices jumped up excitedly and sped after her. Their tails were waiving excitedly in the air.

"Are we hunting first?" Brokenpaw meowed loudly from the back of the group. Wildflight knew the she-cat preferred to hunt rather than fight. That was perfectly fine for Wildflight.

"No! We need to practice fighting! So we can be strong enough to take revenge on BreezeClan for Blizzardstar!" Weaselpaw mewed. He started lagging behind a bit so he could nudge Brokenpaw with his shoulder.

"Oh yeah..." Brokenpaw mumbled as she continued on after her brothers. Wildflight's pelt prickled uncomfortably. "Blizzardstar was

trying to make it so no one needs to fight anymore. I'm not sure how he would feel seeing his newest warriors trying to avenge him with battle." she mewed, hoping to reason with the toms.

Brokenpaw purred, feeling soothed by Wildflight's words. But her brothers stayed silent, clearly disagreeing with their deputy.

She halted the group as they approached a tall oak tree. She swept her tail over the grass as she sat down. "Now, I want you three to split up and try to find as much prey as you can. Try to stay away from the border, we aren't sure how hostile BreezeClan is at the moment." she meowed. She made sure to look at the toms as she spoke. To her relief, it didn't seem like Stormpaw or Weaselpaw were thinking of doing anything bad.

"Just remember that you are almost warriors! Don't do anything to make me think otherwise!" she yowled as the apprentices leapt away and sped into the trees. Great Starclan, keep them away from the border, she thought desperately.

Wildflight set off into the forest to follow them. She decided she would watch Weaselpaw first. It took a little while to find the brown apprentice but soon she happened upon him stalking a small rabbit.

He caught it quickly, without even a moments's pause. Aspenclaw has taught him well, Wildflight thought. In a matter of minutes he had also caught a mouse and a baby sparrow.

Wildflight stepped out of the bushes where she was hiding and purred happily. "Well done! You can take your prey back to camp and wait for me to return with Brokenpaw and Stormpaw."

Weaselpaw nodded eagerly, clearly happy to be praised by the deputy. He charged back to camp immediately. He somehow managed to cram all of his prey in his jaws. When he vanished into the distance, Wildflight turned to go and find Brokenpaw.

It took awhile to catch her scent. But it was constantly interlaced with Stormpaw's scent. I told them to hunt alone, Wildflight thought irritably. Then she heard something that made her blood

turn cold.

"Wildflight! Wildflight, help!" a faint yowling could be heard from the direction of the BreezeClan border. She quickly bounded away, dreading what she would find.

The scent of blood reached her just before she could see the border through the trees. As it came into view, she saw Stormpaw standing over Brokenpaw's bleeding body. A patrol of BreezeClan warriors stood on the border. Their hackles were raised in anger.

"What happened!" Wildflight gasped as she skidded to their side. Snakefang took a step forward, his paw crossing the border onto IceClan's territory. "Your apprentice here was hunting on our territory. I had to teach her a lesson! Seeing as IceClan doesn't know how to train their apprentices!" he sneered. He looked down at Brokenpaw with his teeth bared.

Stormpaw was whimpering beside her, his eyes wide. "I just dared her to cross the border! I didn't think she'd actually do it!" his voice rose to a wail.

Wildflight turned to look down at Brokenpaw. She had not moved or made any noise since she had arrived. Her tail was bent at an awkward angle, and one of her eyes was bloody and closed.

"What is with you BreezeClan warriors! Do you think it's ok to blind an apprentice?" she spat angrily. She squared up to Snakefang, ready to fight. The other BreezeClan warriors shuffled their paws and whispered urgently to one another. They were too scared to step forward.

"Does IceClan think it's ok to cross the borders whenever they please? It's happened more than we would like!" Snakefang hissed.

"Stormpaw, we are taking Brokenpaw back to camp now." Wildflight mewed. Her voice was shaking as she tried to keep control of herself. Stormpaw whimpered, nudging his sister with his muzzle.

As Snakefang started to laugh at their struggle, Wildflight quickly

picked up Brokenpaw by her scruff. She still didn't make a noise. The silence made Wildflight suspect the worst.

"Don't come back!" Snakefang yowled as Wildflight and Stormpaw fled back through the forest. Softgaze will be so upset to see her apprentice like this, Wildflight thought in despair. Without Blizzardstar, BreezeClan would surely rule the forest!

Chapter Sixteen {Edited}

Tinypool found herself sitting next to Blizzardstar once again. She was intently staring at his barley breathing body. She hadn't known what herbs to try and give him and he was starting to grow thin from not eating.

Then she heard a loud racket outside in the clearing. There was the familiar scent of blood on the air. She quickly leapt out of her den and strode over to Wildflight. The deputy had just crashed into the clearing, carrying a very injured Brokenpaw.

Stormpaw was just inside the camp entrance. His flanks were heaving from his run. Weaselpaw had frantically run over from the apprentice's den and was trying to ask Stormpaw what had happened.

"It was BreezeClan!" Wildheart meowed angrily to Tinypool, "they saw her on the border and attacked her!"

Tinypool brushed her tail along the ground as she sat in front of Wildflight. She was staring intently into her eyes. She was trying to see what sort of emotions were lurking there.

"I need you to take Brokenpaw to my den. and I want you to understand that BreezeClan are only like this because of Oakstar. Please don't blame them all for his foolishness." Tinypool tried to keep her voice level. She needed Wildflight to see that she shouldn't let herself become upset over this.

"But they blinded Brokenpaw... Just like Hawkslash..." she meowed sadly as she gently carried Brokenpaw over to Tinypool's den. Stormpaw had recovered and was padding off with Weaselpaw. They were speaking quietly about their encounter at the border.

Tinypool took a deep breath and stood up. She walked back to her den in a few short steps. Wildflight was laying down Brokenpaw in an unused nest close to Blizzardstar. "Now BreezeClan has three cats

that have been crippled by their cruel claws."

Wildflight was growling angrily. She turned to look at Blizzardstar with eyes clouded with mixed emotions.

"But they're still alive." Tinypool mewed softly, "there's no need to start anything over any of this." It would only cause more bloodshed, she thought grimly.

Wildflight turned her gaze to the medicine cat. She saw fiery hate still burning in its depths. But as she blinked, it diminished.

"Yes, Tinypool. You're right." she sighed as she sagged back onto her haunches. The medicine cat worked around Wildflight as she started to clean Brokenpaw's wounds. Tinypool's heart twisted as she started to cover the apprentice's eye with cobweb. She will definitely lose sight in this eye, she thought.

Eventually, Wildflight left the den with a quiet goodbye. Tinypool was still trying to straighten out Brokenpaw's tail. She didn't notice that she was alone once more.

"Tinypool, is that you?" a tiny voice choked. The medicine cat perked her ears and looked up at Brokenpawz. The apprentice's eyes were fluttering open.

"I had this really weird dream. Am I back in our camp now?" she asked softly. Her voice was very weak.

"Yes, Wildflight and Stormpaw brought you back. They said that BreezeClan attacked you on the border." she meowed in response.

"Is Blizzardstar awake?" she asked. This sparkedTinypool's interest. "No, he is still asleep," she answered quickly, "why do you ask?"

Brokenpaw's eyes looked like they were growing heavy again. Her energy quickly evaporating. "I saw him in my dream... I was talking to this.. white she-cat. She said we all had our paths to follow. I saw him... sitting behind her, in a starlit clearing." Brokenpaw's voice shrank to barely a whisper, making it extremely hard for Tinypool to hear her. But then her eyes closed and she was asleep once more.

The medicine cat was staring, wide eyed, at the den floor. That had to have been Starclan, she thought excitedly. That meant that Blizzardstar was in Starclan.

Maybe I need to finally take a visit to the Firestone and speak with our ancestors, she thought. If Brokenpaw was well enough by sunhigh tomorrow, she would set off towards the horizon to visit the Firestone.
~~

Thankfully, Brokenpaw was recovering quickly. She was sitting in her nest a little before sunhigh, cleaning her paws. Wildflight had come to tell Tinypool earlier that morning that she would be giving Stormpaw and Weaselpaw their warrior names.

Brokenpaw seemed happy for her brothers but Tinypool knew that she had wished she was well enough to be made a warrior alongside them. Tinypool brushed her tail against Brokenpaw's side. She was trying to catch her attention.

"You'll still be a warrior one day. You just need to recover right now." she soothed. She hoped to ease the she-cat's sadness.

The apprentice stayed quiet, continuing to groom herself. Then she heard Wildflight's call from outside the medicine den. Brokenpaw stood on shaky paws.

"One day I'll be a warrior and can take my revenge on those mangy BreezeClan cats!" Brokenpaw hissed as she turned to leave the den.

Tinypool gasped, standing up quickly to follow her. "But you don't really feel like that, right?" she asked anxiously. Brokenpaw was a very free minded she-cat. It would be a shame for her to become so bitter over this.

"I guess not," she sighed, "I just wish there was no hostility between us." Her bent tail drooped sadly as she exited the den. Her one good eye was still dull with sadness. Tinypool was quick to follow her.

While they were chatting, all of the warriors had gathered in the clearing. Stormpaw and Weaselpaw were siting next to their

parents, Goldensky and Sootsplash. Their mentors, Aspenclaw and Meadowshine, sat a few paces away.

Hawkslash was sitting with the other elders close to the medicine den entrance. He was clearly not keen on getting close to the crowd. "I smell Brokenpaw." he grunted as Tinypool sat next to him. Brokenpaw sat on Tinypool's other side. She was staring down at her paws.

"Yes, Brokenpaw is here," Tinypool meowed, "she wanted to come see her brothers made into warriors"

Hawkslash nodded slowly, "yes, she should see what BreezeClan has robbed from her. The anger will make her a formidable warrior." he growled. Tinypool didn't respond. She just hoped that Brokenpaw hadn't heard his ramblings.

In a couple short moments, the ceremony had begun. Wildflight was yowling loudly across the camp. "We are gathered here to name two new warriors of IceClan! Blizzardstar can not be here with us. But I will commence this ceremony with his blessing!" she yowled. She looked confident despite her misgivings since Blizzardstar's incident.

The whole clan erupted into cheerful yowls. Their eyes shined as they gazed up at Wildflight. "Weaselpaw, please step forward." she meowed as soon as the clearing grew quiet. The long legged brown apprentice stepped forward. He looked very much like a grown warrior next to Stormpaw.

"Aspenclaw has spoken with me. He believes you are fit enough to become a warrior of IceClan at last. Do you promise to follow the warrior code, and to protect and defend this clan even at the cost of your life?" her question hung in the crisp air. Her intense green eyes burned into Weaselpaw.

"I do!" he meowed clearly. The answer was obvious for him. Wildflight closed her eyes for a brief moment and continued. "Then from this moment on your name will be Weaseltail! We commend you for your bravery and skill with hunting. We welcome you as a full warrior of IceClan."

Weaseltail bowed his head. Excitement and gratitude sparkled in his eyes. In a few moments, Stormpaw stepped forward to take his place.

"Stormpaw, Meadowshine has made it very clear to me that you are ready to become a warrior. Do you promise to follow the warrior code, and to protect and defend this clan even at the cost of your life?" she mewed again. She hoped Stormpaw would answer as eagerly as his brother.

"I do!" he mewed loudly. He bowed his head in respect to Wildflight. "Then from this moment forward, your name will be Stormsurge! We commend you for your battle skills and quick wits. We welcome you as a full warrior of IceClan." her voice was growing hoarse from speaking. She clearly wasn't used to making long speeches yet.

Stormsurge turned away happily and bounded over to Weaseltail. The brothers exchanged a few brief words before padding over to Tinypool and Brokenpaw. Brokenpaw wouldn't meet their eye but stayed where she sat as they approached.

"It'll be your turn next!" Weaseltail promised, resting his tail over her back. Stormsurge nudged her with his shoulder, "then we can all go show those BreezeClan cats what we're made of!"

Brokenpaw just shook her head and stood to leave. She quickly padded back inside the medicine den. "She's just a little upset still. I'm sure she will warm up in the next few days." Tinypool mewed to the toms. They exchanged worried glances before saying goodbye to Tinypool and padding away.

Now's my chance! I should leave for the Firestone, she thought suddenly. She stuck her head inside the den entrance and called to Brokenpaw. "I'm going to be traveling to the Firestone now... will you be able to keep an eye on Blizzardstar for me?" she asked kindly. She had told Brokenpaw earlier that she would be leaving so it wouldn't be a surprise.

"Are you sure I'll be fine to look after Blizzardstar? What if something happens?" she fretted, her good eye growing wide. "He

hasn't woke up yet, so I'm sure you'll be fine." she teased her. She hoped the apprentice wouldn't be offended.

To her relief, Brokenpaw purred as she settled into her nest. "You can count on me, Tinypool." she meowed. She turned and crossed the camp to leave. She said hasty goodbyes to the warriors as she passed them lounging in camp.

Wildflight briefly touched noses with her before she left. She wished her safe travel and a speedy return. Tinypool just hoped she got the answers she was looking for. Or else she might never learn how to free Blizzardstar from his sleeping prison.

Chapter Seventeen {Edited}

Tinypool's journey took her across clan territory and up a very steep, icy mountain. Her silvery fur was slicked back from the snow. It clung to her pelt like spiderweb and melted almost instantly. Eventually, she reached a tall tree jutting out of the mountain side. She decided to stop and take a break.

"Starclan, I am here!" she called out towards the sky above her. She peeked around the tree carefully, into a hidden cavern under the roots. She could see a dim flashing from somewhere inside. The calming aura was drawing her in.

The cavern was significantly warmer than outside. She could feel her paws tingling with warmth as she stepped across the loosely packed soil. She was slowly padding down a short earthen tunnel. After a sharp turn at the end of the tunnel, Tinypool let her attention rest on the Firestone. It was a gigantic gem vein, rich in brilliant fire opal. It stretched up from the floor and across the ceiling like tree roots.

Tinypool stared at it in amazement. The brilliant reds, blues, and pinks danced across the cavern like the auroras in newleaf. Carefully, she stepped up to the magical stones and laid down. She curled her tail around her side. As she pressed her nose against the cold surface, she closed her eyes and fell asleep.
~~

When Tinypool opened her eyes, she was no longer in the mystical cavern. Instead, she was laying in a very lush, grassy clearing. She looked over and noticed that two cats were sitting near the edge of the clearing. One icy white pelted tom and a brown and white speckled she-cat. They were sitting perfectly still, as if frozen in time.

"Blizzardstar!" Tinypool called hopefully. She pricked her ears, expecting a response. But her leader did not move.

"They can't hear you." a calm, feminine voice sounded right next to the medicine cat. She jumped and turned. She locked eyes with an orange and black spotted she-cat.

"Lilybloom..?" Tinypool meowed in confusion. Not quite sure as to why BreezeClan's old medicine cat was here. "I've come to speak to Blizzardstar. Why can't he hear me?" she asked sadly.

BreezeClan's old medicine cat purred softly. Her soothing tone surprisingly calmed Tinypool. "Blizzardstar has to do this part on his own," Lilybloom meowed calmly, "but he is smart. I'm sure he will make the right choice."

Tinypool stared desperately at her leader. She could feel anxiety fluttering in her chest. "Why do you care what happens to him? Didn't one of our warriors kill you?" Tinypool asked bravely. She felt bold despite her depression over Blizzardstar.

"Yes, it was Blizzardstar himself who struck me down in battle. But I can not blame him. Our ancestors have been blinded by this greed for power for many seasons..." she sighed.

"Brokenpaw said she saw Blizzardstar here, with Snowpuddle. I wanted to try and talk to him." Tinypool whispered. She felt like this was utterly hopeless! Her long trek to the Fire Stone was in vain.

"Don't give up just yet." Lilybloom murmured. She pressed close to her fellow medicine cat. "His mind may be conflicted with battle and harmony but his heart will truly lead him home. My daughter was fortunate to have such a wise tom to care for her." she purred.

Tinypool gasped in surprise. She stared at Lilybloom in shock. "Spottedrose is your daughter?" she asked. She could never believe that a medicine cat would have kits with their leader.

"Oh, yes. There was a time when Oakstar and I were still foolish young cats. I thought our love was enough to soothe his evil thoughts but I see that he is still very much the same." Tinypool flattened her ears, feeling the same desperate longing in her chest. Did Blizzardstar know that Lilybloom was Spottedrose's mother?

"Spottedrose has the mind of a warrior but the love and compassion of a medicine cat. It is her destiny to save Blizzardstar. She holds the fate to both our clans." Lilybloom whispered. Her voice was gradually growing softer.

Tinypool tore her gaze away from Blizzardstar's frozen form to see that Lilybloom had dissapeared. In her place, another cat was approaching. It was her old mentor, Nightfang.

"Hello, young one." he purred as he sat down beside her. His gray and black striped pelt was exactly how she remembered it. His familiar scent tickled her whiskers.

"Hello, Nightfang." Tinypool mewed. She felt warm all over from his presence. She was more eager to see him than she was to speak with Lilybloom. He turned his attention to Snowpuddle and Blizzardstar across the clearing, "I know how hopeless you feel about all of this..." he began slowly.

Tinypool flicked her tail but stayed quiet as he continued. "You have sat alone in your den for far too long now. The clouds have cleared and I have finally found an apprentice to follow in your footsteps." he purred. Excitement shined in his gaze as he looked down at her.

Tinypool looked a little puzzled. There were no kits or apprentices in the clan right now. "She is a little broken right now, but over time she will mend. She already has a gentle nature and quick wits. She will serve IceClan well as the next medicine cat." he meowed.

Tinypool felt her heart start to thump in her chest. "You mean Brokenpaw, don't you?" she whispered. She had been hopeful that she would recover and be named a warrior like her brothers. StarClan clearly had other plans.

He nodded slowly, "She will help you during this difficult time. At this moment, Oakstar has begun plotting to attack your camp so he can kill Blizzardstar once and for all. You need to return to your camp mates and prepare."

Nightfang's warning made Tinypool's paws grow cold with fear. "I

will go now! I heal my clan to the best of my abilities." she promised. Nightfang leaned into her, letting their fur tangle together. Tinypool didn't want to wake from this vision just yet.

"Lilybloom told me it was Spottedrose's destiny to save Blizzardstar. Is that true?" She asked curiously. She was hoping he would speak instead of vanishing like the other she-cat.

"You do not need to pry on other cats' destinies." He chided her lightly. His answer was very unsatisfying. "How will I know when Blizzardstar will return?" She asked. She was hoping for a more straight forward answer.

"He must first choose the path he wants to take. The few of us here in Starclan are hoping he chooses wisely." Nightfang meowed. Tinypool sighed inwardly. Sometimes Blizzardstar didn't act very wise at all!

"You're clan is strong. They will join together to face any threat that the forest may bring." He mewed. She looked up at him, hope sparkling in her beautiful blue eyes.

"I know you can do this." he whispered as Tinypool blinked her eyes and woke in the Firestone cavern once more.

Chapter Eighteen {Inserted}

Spottedrose pulled her paws further underneath her chest. She had woken early with pains in her stomach. When she went to visit Dewdrop, the medicine cat was still in a deep sleep.

After she had woke up, she quickly inspected Spottedrose. "Have you eaten anything bad?" Dewdrop asked as she sniffed her calico pelt.

"No, just normal fresh kill." She promised. She wasn't aware of eating anything out of the ordinary.

Dewdrop sniffed all along the she-cats pelt. After a moment, she had her lie down so she could inspect her flank. It looked bloated, and felt a little hard to the touch.

"Have you had any pain or discomfort before today?" The medicine cat asked slowly. Spottedrose had to think hard, she was pretty sure this was the first time her stomach had hurt this way.

"No this is the first time." She meowed. The ache in her stomach was slowly subsiding. Even though it wasn't severe, it was still constantly there.

After a deep breath and then a long, drawn out sigh, Dewdrop sat down to look at her. "I think you may be pregnant," Dewdrop observed, "maybe about a moon or a moon and a half."

Spottedrose stared at the white and silver medicine cat in a sort of happy astonishment. She couldn't be expecting kits! That would mean there was only one possible cat that was the father.

She felt her pelt warm all over at the thought of bearing these kits. Her tail thudded happily on the floor of the den while she lay, Dewdrop still inspecting her.

"You seem pleased," Dewdrop meowed, "so you know the father

then?"

A purr was rising in Spottedrose's chest, louder than claws scraping across rock. "Oh yes!" She mewed happily.

It was as if her depression over the countless lonely nights was finally ebbing. If Blizzardstar really was dead like her clanmates said, she would have his kits and bring his noble blood back to the forest.

Dewdrop was looking at her expectantly, clearly wanting to know who her mate was. Spottedrose was not paying attention, she was just positively overjoyed with the news.

She rolled back over and stood to leave. Then she finally noticed Dewdrop looking at her. "Oh, well..." she meowed softly, "it doesn't really matter who the father is. He's dead anyways." Her voice choked a little on the last words, clearly still not over that grim fact.

"Your mate has died?" Dewdrop asked curiously. She only knew of one cat who had died recently. "Was it Rockclaw?" She asked seriously.

"No... not Rockclaw." She purred. Dewdrop shuffled her paws, becoming very nervous.

"Was it.. Blizzardstar?" She whispered, her voice rising with disbelief. Spottedrose's pelt prickled at Dewdrop's tone. Obviously the medicine cat was not at all pleased with this news.

"You may go to the nursery and make yourself a nest," Dewdrop suddenly dismissed her, "you should not be leaving camp for any warrior duties for now on. Only light exercise."

"Okay, Dewdrop." Spottedrose murmured. She lowered her gaze as she dipped her head and quickly left the medicine den. Dewdrop's reaction had left her heart thudding in her chest.

I wonder if she is going to go tell Oakstar, she thought worriedly. Atleast she knew that IceClan would take her in if she was banished once more. But with the death of Blizzardstar, she wasn't sure if they would treat her the same.

As she ducked inside the nursery, she had to stop and let her eyes adjust to the darkness of the den. It was empty, but there was still a tiny bit of fluffy moss in the corner to make her nest. As she started to nestle herself into her tiny bed, she could hear pawsteps approaching quickly.

"Spottedrose, are you in there?" An angry growl sounded right outside the den entrance. Her paws felt cold when she instantly recognized the voice. It was Oakstar.

"Yes, I'm in here." She meowed softly. She curled her tail around her slightly enlarged belly. When he slid into the tiny space of the nursery, he turned his head to look at her.

"Dewdrop has come to tell me you're expecting kits." He meowed curtly. Spottedrose could tell he was holding back a very strong emotion. But if it was anger or joy, she could not tell. He just looked like he might explode, or suddenly start yelling at her.

"Are you upset with me?" She whispered. She stared down at her paws, not wanting to see the disapproval in his gaze.

"I should be." He meowed simply. She felt his tail tip touch her side, and she looked up at her father. She thought he almost looked sad.

"I just want you to be safe." He meowed. Spottedrose felt an argument bubbling on her tongue from that statement. She knew if he just accepted peace like Blizzardstar, they would all truly be safe. But now was not the time for arguements.

"I want my kits to be safe, too." She meowed sternly. If Oakstar knew who her mate was at all, she must be sure that her kits would never be harmed.

"Yes, I will always be sure to protect my kin." He purred as he scooted a little closer to Spottedrose's side. It almost sounded forced but she wasn't going to reject this unusual affection from her father.

"I think I'd like to try and rest now." She meowed, a little embarrassed to have to ask him to leave. He jumped up and nodded, "yes, I'll leave now. Just remember that Dewdrop said no

warrior duties."

He glanced back at her one more time before leaving the den. Spottedrose could see he was fighting with mixed emotions about all of this. She wasn't even so sure herself yet.

She had only just been told that she was having kits. But who would help her raise them? Would they want to be warriors here, or would they want to be in IceClan. Then an intensely upsetting thought occurred to her; would she even ever tell them who their father was?

She wasn't sure. Oh Blizzardstar, I wish you were here to help me with this. She looked up at the roof of the den, hoping to see through the branches to the pre dawn sky. But she was closed in, and she felt a million miles away from ever seeing Blizzardstar again.

Chapter Nineteen {Inserted}

It was late at night when Dewdrop had woken up from a troubling dream. She could remember it well; being trapped in a shadowy forest with no escape to the light. She turned to lick her pelt, trying to smooth her ruffled fur. Surely, this dream was a sign from StarClan! Excitement surged throughout the medicine cat's body. BreezeClan had not heard from their ancestors in an impossibly long time.

She quickly stood and ducked out of her den into the quiet camp. A large, perfectly round moon shone in the pitch black night sky above. She took a deep breath, trying to collect her thoughts. A lone owl hooted somewhere in the distance, making Dewdrop's pelt crawl with foreboding. Suppose her dream from StarClan meant that danger was looming? She could only think of one possible thing that could threaten her Clan now.

With Wildstar as the new IceClan leader, BreezeClan had been able to stick to their land undisturbed. No, it wasn't a threat from IceClan; she decided. She continued to stare up at the star studded sky. A harsh breeze rolled down the nearby hills, filling the valley with the scent of grass and pollens from the trees nearby.

Dewdrop narrowed her eyes in concentration as she recalled her dream. Even though it had only been mere minutes, the vision was fading like mist in intense sunlight. "Oh StarClan, what are you trying to tell me?" she murmured thoughtfully. As if in response, Dewdrop heard someone shifting in their nest nearby. As she turned to see who was stirring, she saw a spotted head appear from the nursery entrance. But as quickly as she appeared, she had turned and vanished back into the den.

I wonder what she was planning on doing, Dewdrop thought curiously. It was very late at night, surely the queen should be trying to relax. It had only been a couple nights since Spottedrose was told that she was expecting kits, and she was eager to accept all the well wishes from her fellow warriors. It had seemed that the

others had practically forgiven her for her treason, but a few had not. Dewdrop was not sure how to feel about the whole thing.

On one paw, Oakstar was finally happy to have Spottedrose back in the Clan. But, with her arrival she had also brought the kits of Blizzardstar. Then a dark thought struck her like a hailstone falling from the sky. If darkness had been brought into the depths of BreezeClan, it had to be from that foolish she-cat!

Dewdrop's mind started to race with questions, unsure of how to proceed with her suspicions. If Spottedrose's kits were bringing a darkness to BreezeClan, she had to get rid of them. But how would she get rid of her kits without Oakstar knowing? She had heard her leader's remark to Spottedrose, that his kin should not be harmed. Maybe that meant that she should wait until they were born and then leave them out in the forest.

"No, no. That wouldn't work," she meowed softly as she turned to duck back into the privacy of her den. Even though it was late at night, Dewdrop would hate to be overheard. It was already dangerous enough to be plotting the disappearance of Oakstar's kin. She needed some way to get rid of them without making it obvious that some cat was responsible.

Dewdrop started to absent mindedly comb through her herb store. She knew she still had a few shriveled yarrow berries at the back of the cleft of roots and leaves. Reaching a careful paw to the back, she scooped them up in the pads of her paw to put down on the den floor. These berries were truly powerful. They had the ability to end a cat's suffering and send them on their journey to StarClan.

Only in extreme situations were they to be used, but Dewdrop felt there was no more urgent a situation than this. If BreezeClan were to survive, Spottedrose's kits must die. The medicine cat chuckled in satisfaction as she hooked one of the shriveled berries onto her claws. She held it up to her muzzle, inspecting it for any breaks or tears in the skin. But it looked unscathed, perfect to administer to an unsuspecting victim.

She laid the berry back on the ground and began to pick some other herbs from her store to bundle together. The borage leaves she

gathered were big and leafy enough that a small berry would not be easily detected. Satisfied with her hasty plan, she gently picked up the herbs in her jaws and left the den. She was careful not to bite too hard, just incase the berry were to burst and leave the poisonous juices in her mouth.

As she padded over to the nursery, she could hear Spottedrose fidgeting inside. She set the herbs down at her feet so she could call into the den. "Spottedrose, are you awake?'

"Yes, you can come in," she meowed after a moment's hesitation. Dewdrop picked up the herbs and slid into the den, urgency starting to make her heart beat faster. She didn't think Spottedrose would suspect her of any foul play, but the sooner she gave her the berry the better. "I brought you some borage to help with your milk," she meowed kindly.

Spottedrose eyed the herbs at Dewdrop's paws warily. "And you had to come give me herbs past moonhigh? Won't I have to worry about my milk closer to them being born?" she asked curiously. The questions made sense but Dewdrop had not thought of what she would say in this situation. Oh no, she's going to figure out what I'm trying to do; she thought in a panic. She tried to appear calm as she replied. "I just saw you poke your head out a little while ago. I figured I would bring them to you before I forgot."

Spottedrose still looked suspicious, she clearly was not sure if she wanted to accept the help from her medicine cat. Dewdrop's pelt prickled with unease as an intense silence formed between them. Spottedrose was staring at her, trying to decide if she should truly trust her. "Thank you," she whispered after several more long moments.

Obediently, she bent over to lick up the herbs. Dewdrop sat as still as a boulder as Spottedrose chewed up the leaves. She looked uncomfortable, her muscles rigid as she watched the queen. Once she finished, she sat back and started to lick her paws clean. There wasn't a single scrap of the herbs left on the ground before her.

Dewdrop was still sitting, frozen like a spear of ice hanging from the branch of a tree. "Are you okay, Dewdrop?" She asked warily.

She snapped her attention back to the queen, her blue eyes wide with guilty pleasure.

"Yes, yes. I'm just going to go back to my nest and go to sleep now," she meowed hastily. Spottedrose looked at her intently, clearly wanting to say more. Dewdrop turned to leave, but not without saying a soft goodbye. As soon as she exited the nursery, she ran back to the safety of her nest.

I can't believe I did it, she thought excitedly as she curled into the depths of her mossy nest. Now Blizzardstar's kits will die and BreezeClan will not be lost to darkness. But truly, Dewdrop was not even remotely aware of how deep her clan had sunk into the evil darkness.

Chapter Twenty {Edited}

Oakstar sat silent and still, keeping watch over the camp from outside the nursery. With every passing heartbeat, the sun sunk lower into the cloudy sky.

"You're doing fine, Spottedrose," Dewdrop's soothing voice cooed from inside the warmth of the nursery. Spottedrose had shocked the whole clan with her premature kitting. It was far too soon for them to survive, and the entire clan was growing worried. She had started around dawn, and with each passing hour her own survivability was growing thin.

"Should I fetch more water?" Foxstreak's anxious meow sounded, close to the den entrance from the inside. Oakstar could barely see her ginger fur through the branches of the den.

"Yes, please! It's become far too crowded with you here," Dewdrop scolded, her tone changing from calm to irritated in a flash. Foxstreak's orange fur bumped into Oakstar as she quickly backed out of the den.

"Oops! Sorry!" she gasped as she bounded away out of the clearing. Oakstar watched where she disappeared for a few seconds before sticking his broad shoulders into the nursery.

Spottedrose was still the only expecting queen, giving Dewdrop plenty of room to work with her as she kitted. "I thought I told you it was too crowded," Dewdrop snapped as she turned around to look at Oakstar.

"It seems like you have plenty of room," he scoffed, his broad shoulders blocking the den entrance.

Dewdrop sighed, turning back to Spottedrose. "Foxstreak is nice and all, she is just under my paws," Dewdrop meowed. Oakstar was well aware how close of a bond his daughter had with the fiery orange she-cat. They had been friends since they were apprentices.

"Foxstreak just worries, as do I," Oakstar murmured, stretching his neck to try and catch a glimpse of Spottedrose. She was stretched on her side, her pelt spiked and radiating powerful heat.

"Well you shouldn't worry! I know what I'm doing," Dewdrop grunted as she pressed along Spottedrose's flank. She chirped in surprise as she felt a strong contraction under her paws. "Here comes the first one," the Breezeclan medicine cat gasped as another strong ripple passed over the queen's flank.

Oakstar watched in a shocked silence as Spottedrose delivered her first kit. After so much straining and pushing, it finally appeared. Underneath all the dirt and blood, it was a pure white she-kit! Oakstar's pelt prickled at similarities she shared with Blizzardstar.

"Stop staring like a daft squirrel and help me!" Dewdrop hissed, flicking her tail tip over Oakstar's nose. The massive brown and white tabby pushed in a little further, hoping he wouldn't be too large to fit into the den.

Spottedrose looked completely worn down, but she started to twist around as Oakstar neared. "Is the kit... is it ok," her voice cracked with pure exhaustion.

"Your kit is fine," Dewdrop mewed as she started to shred up some leaves for Spottedrose to eat. "Start licking the kit," Dewdrop instructed Oakstar as she picked up the kit and placed it at his paws.

The fur along his spine spiked as he stared down at the she-kit. She looked almost exactly like Blizzardstar, even down to her long and plume-like whiskers.

"Just do it!" Dewdrop growled, sensing her leader's hesitation. Immediately, he leaned down and started to lick the kit's fur the wrong way. In response, the little kit started to squirm and squeak under Oakstar's tongue. She was so incredibly tiny, it was a surprise to him that she was even alive at all.

"Here comes the other," Dewdrop mewed encouragingly as

Spottedrose strained against the powerful contraction. Oakstar watched as Dewdrop bent down and picked up a sizeable black and white tom. As he had stopped to watch, the tiny white she-cat had started to move and squeak as she looked for the warmth of her mother.

"This she-kit is a feisty one," Oakstar commented, feeling a warmth flare inside him. Despite his fury at IceClan and their ignorant leader, he could not feel anything but love for his daughter and her kits. Even though they had been born extremely early, with the odds set against them, they were still alive.

"They are beautiful," he mewed, nudging Spottedrose with his paw. She rolled over slowly, her eyes dull with exhaustion. The white she-kit squeaked and tried to crawl towards Spottedrose, but she was too extremely tiny. Oakstar scooted her closer to her belly with his paw.

"Oh, Blizzardstar," Spottedrose sighed as she closed her eyes and started to drift into immediate sleep. Dewdrop turned and started to herd Oakstar out of the den, silencing his protests with low growls.

"She must rest now, you can see her again in the morning," she meowed as they exited the den. The sky was starting to darken with night, the shining stars of silver pelt slowly starting to appear with the approaching darkness.

"How can she think of Blizzardstar now, when she is back in BreezeClan with cats that care about her," Oakstar meowed desperately, feeling anger swamp him once more.

"He cares about her too," Dewdrop mewed simply, "they both seem convinced to show you that our kin are better off living in peace."

Oakstar flinched, "it sounds like you feel that way too. I'm only doing what's best for our clan," he growled.

Dewdrop flicked her tail angrily, turning to stare into Oakstar's leafy green eyes. "I'm sure the battle that killed Lilybloom was best for our clan," Dewdrop spat, "I know she had to see SOMETHING in you, to love you like she did."

Oakstar stayed silent, his eyes wide with shock. Dewdrop held his gaze, her tail still flicking all about. "If she was still here, I'm sure none of this would be happening! As far as I am concerned, I'm the only one doing what's best for our Clan," she meowed harshly.

"What do you mean?" he asked seriously. Dewdrop flicked her tail, obviously not willing to tell Oakstar about what she had done that previous night. The fact that she had poisoned Spottedrose was already unforgiveable, but she knew that Oakstar would not see why she had to do it. Even though her plan had failed, the kits were weak. There was a still a chance that they could join StarClan in the next few days. Oakstar was shaking his head, a growl rising in his throat.

"It doesn't matter! The only way to fix any of this is to kill all of IceClan! Only then, will my family live in peace," Oakstar meowed loudly. Dewdrop sighed as Oakstar turned and padded away. She had gotten away with it!

In the morning, Oakstar would meet with Hailstorm to discuss an invasion on IceClan. Ever so slowly, the final battle was becoming a dreadful reality.

Chapter Twenty One {Edited}

The day that Tinypool returned from the Firestone was very eventful for IceClan. She had returned a little before dawn with Wildflight anxiously waiting for her. After they had hastily discussed Tinypool's meeting with Starclan, Wildflight immediately called a meeting. She told the Clan that it was StarClan's will for Brokenpaw to train as the next medicine cat. The clan had been very surprised but happy during the ceremony, cheering for Brokenpaw and making her feel important once more.

Now that the glamour had passed, Brokenpaw was sitting in the medicine den at Blizzardstar's side. Tinypool had asked her to watch him and alert her if he happened to move at all. He was starting to grow very thin, Brokenpaw could tell that it worried Tinypool. Of course he would slowly starve, without any food or water to sustain him as he slept.

Maybe I could visit in him Starclan, Brokenpaw thought seriously. Tinypool said she could not speak with him, but I remember hearing him speak and watching him move freely as I dreamed. Now that she was a medicine cat apprentice, Brokenpaw felt confidence building inside her once more. Her tragic accident and the loss of her eye had left her feeling stupid and useless.

She knew that Tinypool was very busy with collecting and organizing her herbs, Brokenpaw was sure that she wouldn't notice if she slipped away to her nest. After all, she was only trying to help.

Quietly, Brokenpaw slunk away to her nest at the back of the den and curled up. She kept her mind filled with thoughts of Blizzardstar, wishing with all of her might to speak with him in Starclan. She took a deep breath, relaxing as she began to slip into sleep.
~~

The Dark Forest was teeming with activity; evil heartless cats were

joining together to watch over their clans and discuss the upcoming battle.

Blizzardstar sat a little ways off, growing curious from the commotion. All he could hear from the others was that Oakstar was planning another attack on his clan.

"Of course Oakstar is strong, but without Blizzardstar surely IceClan will fight twice as hard," a dark pelted tabby hissed from the edge of the group.

"That clan is full of mouse hearts! They'd rather sit in camp than fight for what's theirs," an ancient, ragged BreezeClan cat snarled. Blizzardstar felt his fur grow hot with embarrassment at his taunt.

"My clan are not mouse hearts," he growled as he pushed through the crowd. At their center, a large pond stretched away into a neat circle. In its murky depths, Blizzardstar could see images of many different cats.

Closest to the bank, a large section of water depicted Oakstar standing in front of a large group of warriors. He was instructing them battle techniques, swift and deadly enough to overpower even the strongest warrior.

"Oakstar is crazy! I'm sure he won't rest until all of IceClan is destroyed," some strange cat yowled from the back of the group. Blizzardsar's mind was swirling as he looked over all the images resting on the surface of the pond.

Then he saw her; it was Spottedrose. She was laying in the BreezeClan nursery, two very tiny kits nestled into her flank. Blizzardstar sagged back onto his haunches, feeling relief swamp over him. He had been so afraid that something had happened to her! But there she was, and she had had kits! They must be mine, he thought excitedly.

"Move," a rusty orange she-cat snarled as she shoved him over to get a better look into the pond. But he had found what he was looking for, Spottedrose was safe!

Blizzardstar quickly dodged around the pelts crowding around him until he was free from the commotion. "You don't belong here, you know," a single voice mewed softly from the shadows nearby.

Polarstar narrowed his eyes as he peered into the dark, trying to make out who was speaking to him. To his surprise, it was Mudstar; the leader before him. Blizzardstar felt his heart twist at the sight of his former leader, his friend, his teacher.

"I know that your heart does not belong here," Mudstar meowed again, more sure this time. "You belong on the other side of that bush, away from all of us forsaken old souls."

Blizzardstar felt his paws prickling with sadness as he spoke, "I can't believe that you'd be here," he meowed, "surely there is a mistake?" In his dream where he had spoken to Mudstar, he had not thought to look at his surroundings. His once noble leader was condemned to the darkness.

Mudstar laughed, shaking his head, "no, Blizzardstar, there are no mistakes. I have killed countless cats in my life. Whether it was out of greed, or pride in my Clan. I may have once thought it was what StarClan wanted but we were all wrong." He looked at Blizzardstar, his gaze intense.

"Why do you think I appointed you as deputy? I knew your views were best for IceClan. You would lead them into a world that wasn't filled with violence and bloodshed," Mudstar meowed, "I knew that without you, my clanmates were doomed to follow this endless, bloody existence."

Blizzardstar stared down at his paws, wishing that Mudstar was right. But surely peace wasn't right for the forest, not with everything he was raised to believe. "But what if I can't do it," Blizzardstar whispered. He turned his thoughts back to Spottedrose and his kits. Surely he could do it for them.

"It is your destiny," Mudstar murmured. Blizzardstar could still hear the other Dark Forest warriors fighting for a look into the pond. No, he didn't want this for any of them.

He dipped his head politely to Mudstar, knowing that he might not ever see his old leader again. "I'll take good care of IceClan," he promised. The old IceClan leader simply nodded as Blizzardstar turned and vanished into the thorn bush.

On the other side, everything was quiet. Not a cat was in sight, there were no scents or sounds lingering in the air. He looked back into the depths of the thorn bush but could not see or hear any of the Dark Forest warriors and their angry growling.

"Blizzardstar," a soft voice called from the edge of the trees. A black and brown she-cat was racing towards him, her fur fluffed up and her tail waiving with happiness. He squinted to see her more clearly when it looked like one of her eyes were missing.

"I knew I could find you," she purred as she reached his side. She looked up at him happily, not daring to blink in case he would disappear. Even with one of her eyes missing, he could just barely recognize her.

"Brokenpaw? How did you get here, in Starclan?" he asked curiously. Clearly she wasn't dead, her pelt didn't sparkle with stars like the other Starclan cats'.

"Tinypool visited the Fire Stone to try and speak with you but she said she couldn't. I wanted to see if maybe I could reach you," she meowed, puffing out her chest. Blizzardstar purred, bending down to touch noses with the apprentice.

"I'm glad you were able to reach me; but what did Tinypool need to speak with me about," he asked. Brokenpaw had started to pace around Blizzardstar, urgency still coursing through her paws.

"She just wanted to know how to help you! She said that a Starclan cat told her that Oakstar is plotting to wipe out IceClan," she meowed hastily. Blizzardstar nodded, figuring this out just before in his visit to the Dark Forest.

"Just tell Tinypool that I'm sure I've picked the right path. I should be home soon," he meowed. He looked down at Brokenpaw. It had felt so good to see his clanmate again. He felt that she was feeling

the same, she couldn't take her eyes off of him.

"I feel so much better; seeing you like this, instead of that empty husk back in the medicine den," Brokenpaw whispered. He nudged her softly with his muzzle, hoping to perk her up a little.

"I'll be home soon, just tell Tinypool to try and be patient," Blizzardstar mewed softly as Brokenpaw's eyes started to grow heavy.

She tried to fight the sensation as much as she could, but her body gave in and she opened her eyes in the medicine den once more. Blizzardstar said to be patient, but how much time do we really have left, she thought sadly.

Chapter Twenty Two {Edited}

It was eerily silent in the Dark Forest as Blizzardstar carefully snuck back through the thorn bush. The vision pond on the other end of the clearing was deserted, not a single cat in sight.

Starclan did not have any means of looking down on their clanmates in the waking world, for now only the murky pond could answer Blizzardstar's questions. He quickly crossed the clearing, hoping no one would notice his white pelt through the gloom.

On the bank of the pond, Blizzardstar narrowed his eyes and peered into the depths. At once, he was presented with a vision of Spottedrose. She was resting in the BreezeClan nursery, her two kits were sleeping peacefully at her side.

I wonder if I can reach her at all, he thought as he dabbed his paw over the still water. Ripples distorted his vision of Spottedrose, but after a few moments it shone clear once more.

Taking a deep breath, Polarstar crouched next to the pond and touched his nose to the water's surface. It felt like his entire body was clutched with cold before his eyes closed and the forest vanished around him.
~~

Spottedrose had just laid down with her kits for the night. Oakstar had insisted that she bring them out to show the clan even though they were still so small. Their rough and loud demeanor scared the kittens, giving Spottedrose a reason to return to the nursery after a couple of minutes.

She had almost grown frightened to take them around her clanmates. She didn't want any of their battle hungry thoughts to brush off on her innocent children.

Almost immediately Spottedrose fell asleep, her tail curled over her kits protectively. But just as quickly as she shut her eyes, she was

opening them again to find she was standing in a dark, murky forest.

All around her, the scents and sounds of many cats drifted in the air. "Is this Starclan," she called into the mist.

"No, this isn't Starclan," a gruff voice responded. Spottedrose jumped, whirling around to see who had spoken. It didn't seem like anyone was around, but as her eyes grew accustomed to the dark she saw a figure.

"I don't know what I'm doing here," Spottedrose mewed, panic starting to creep into her tone. The strange cat was inching closer to her, its eyes hard and cold with hate.

Surprisingly, the unknown cat jumped towards Spottedrose. It's paws were outstretched, long sharp claws extending from their sheaths.

"Help!" Spottedrose screeched as she bunched her muscles and shot away from the stranger. But it wouldn't be that easy; she could hear the cat's labored panting as it gave chase.

On and on she ran through the fog, rotting toadstools and stagnant puddles of putrid water tripping her up almost constantly. I'm going to die, she thought frantically as she dug her claws deep into the leaf mold.

In a blink, Spottedrose launched herself up a nearby tree. The branches were brittle and bare, but she didn't think that the stranger would follow her here. Thankfully, the strange cat padded away after several minutes of pointless yowling and hissing.

The forest creaked and groaned all around her, despite the fact that not even a light breeze blew through the trees. "How did I even get here," Spottedrose hissed, looking down from her branch.

She didn't want to leave the safety of the tree if there were other crazy cats down there waiting for her. With a sigh, she leaned her haunches back against the trunk and looked up through the branches. The sky was pitch black with not even a single star to

share its light.

"Spottedrose," an achingly familiar voice called from somewhere close by. All of her senses were instantly alert, searching the ground for any sign of a white pelt in the mist.

To her relief, Blizzardstar padded around an adjacent tree and looked up at her in the branches. "What are you doing up there," he asked curiously, his tail kinked high over his back.

"Some mangy furball tried to rip my pelt off," she hissed as she slowly started to pick her way back to the ground. When her paws were safely back on the slimy grass, she caught herself staring at Blizzardstar.

"You can't be here," she whispered, "that means that you're dead. You just can't be dead." Her voice grew frightened and desperate, her heart started to thump uncomfortably against her chest.

He padded close beside her, inhaling her scent deeply. "I'm not dead," he soothed, running his tail along her spine. What exactly was happening to him was very hard to explain, he didn't expect her to understand.

"I just had to see you," he breathed, nuzzling her shoulder with his muzzle. Spottedrose relaxed against him, blissfully calm despite her surroundings. It made her think back to the night she shared with him in his den, with the soft pitter patter of rain on the tree that they nested in.

"I've had our kits,"Spottedrose murmured, "the she-kit looks just like you." She thought back to her kits, resting peacefully in the nursery back in BreezeClan's camp.

"Yes, I saw them," he meowed. He didn't voice his fears that his precious she-kit would not be safe around Oakstar, not with the similarities that they shared. He knew if Spottedrose didn't feel that they were in danger, then he wouldn't worry her.

"I was thinking her name would be Frostkit," Spottedrose continued. She had been thinking of names for the pair all morning

and evening; it wasn't a very simple task.

"I like Pinekit, for the male," Blizzardstar cut in. Spottedrose purred, feeling her spirits lift for the first time since she was left back in her home camp.

"Frostkit and Pinekit," Spottedrose whispered, feeling her emotions swell as she spoke the names. She twined her tail with Blizzardstar's, relishing the closeness after all the depression she had suffered.

While Blizzardstar and Spottedrose were speaking, they hadn't noticed that a group of cats had appeared and were slowly stalking towards them. To Blizzardstar's surprise, Mudstar was at the front of the small group.

"Is this Spottedrose," Mudstar rasped, letting his eyes comb over the slender calico. He flicked his tail as a signal, for the others to advance. The other cats skunk forward, sniffing Spottedrose all over.

She jumped back angrily, clearly not wanting the mangy flea bags to be that close to her. "It's ok, Mudstar has helped me to survive in this evil place," Blizzardstar meowed to Spottedrose.

"I've come to send you back to Starclan," Mudstar meowed, "you can no longer linger in this forest if you wish to return to your loved ones."

Spottedrose stood quickly, turning to Blizzardstar. "Well, you heard him! Let's go so that you can leave this place," she mewed hastily.

The other two cats returned to their positions behind Mudstar, glaring angrily at Spottedrose. "I never told you that you could shred her pelt for your nests," Mudstar growled as they started to bicker between themselves.

Blizzardstar dipped his head greatfully to his old friend, wishing that he would see him again one day in Starclan. "This means goodbye, then," Blizzardstar meowed, "I will lead our clan onto the right path, so that our kin will never need to walk this forest again."

Mudstar purred, his tail waving in a large arc behind him. "I believe in you," he meowed.

With that, Blizzardstar started to lead Spottedrose back to the thorn bush. In a matter of minutes, they crossed back over to the mystical Starclan clearing.

Blizzardstar turned to Spottedrose, noticing that her pelt was starting to sparkle and fade. He looked up at the sky and noticed that streaks of sunlight were racing over the horizon.

"I'll see you soon," Blizzardstar breathed. Spottedrose purred as her calico pelt finally vanished into the air. Soon, I will be home with my family, Blizzardstar thought happily, nothing would stop him now.

Chapter Twenty Three {Edited}

Shimmerpelt blinked open her eyes in the BreezeClan nursery, her tail curled tightly around her kits. "Frostkit and Pinekit," she purred, nuzzling them both happily.

She knew that seeing Blizzardstar in her dream had been no coincidence. He had summoned her to Starclan, to tell her that he would be returning home soon. But how long did that really mean?

"I wish I could take you to see your father," she meowed, brushing her tail softly over the kits' pelts. They were still so very young and vulnerable, taking them out in the endless cold would be dangerous.

Suddenly, Dewdrop poked her silver head through the nursery entrance. Her mouth was full of roots and berries, staining her chest fur with brown and red.

"I've come to give you some parsimin root and saffron berries," she purred as she sat them down. "The root will help you supplement your vitamins better in your milk; and the berries will help keep you relaxed," she recited from the herbs and their remedies from memory.

Spottedrose started to eat the herbs, still feeling positively overjoyed by her dream only moments before. It seemed like Dewdrop was sensing her elation, she purred happily as the queen finished up the last of her herbs.

"I'm glad you're finally starting to relax. Oakstar only wants what is best for you," Dewdrop mewed softly as she started to examine the kits.

"Oh, that's not it," Spottedrose sighed, "Blizzardstar visited me in my dreams last nite. He told me that he was trapped in Starclan, but now he will be returning to the forest." Her voice was light and a little wary, she didn't want any warriors outside to overhear her.

"Blizzardstar is returning," Dewdrop asked curiously, "what will you do then?" The question felt a little odd, almost like Dewdrop was trying to interrogate her.

"I'm not sure... I will want him to come and see our kits," she mumbled, unsure of what was in store for Blizzardstar and their little family.

"Oakstar will not want him here. All you're going to end up doing is stirring up all these powerful feelings. You know your father can not control his emotions," Dewdrop meowed seriously. She had surely thought that Spottedrose would leave the white leader alone, after she had thought he was dead for so long.

"If Oakstar won't have him here then we will go to IceClan. They're plenty kind to me," Spottedrose mewed stubbornly. Dewdrop sat back, the kits looked perfectly healthy from what she could see.

"You know I can't allow you to take those kits out in the cold, the whole way to IceClan's camp," Dewdrop meowed softly, her voice was almost menacing as she took a step towards the den entrance.

"You can't stop me," Spottedrose growled, narrowing her eyes as she glared at the medicine cat.

Dewdrop held her breath as she locked eyes with Spottedrose. She felt her thoughts start to wander in a sinister direction once again. She knew that she could guarantee that Spottedrose could not run away to Iceclan.

With a flick of her tail, Dewdrop whirled around and exited the den. She felt her pelt crackling with tension, she wished she could have just slashed her claws across that smug queen's face. If her yarrow berry would have just killed the kits, she wouldn't be speaking nonsence about running away.

She quickly trotted over to Oakstar's den, sticking her slender muzzle through the entrance. "Oakstar?"

She could hear him stand quickly from his nest, clearly not expecting anyone to bother him. "Come in Dewdrop," he mewed

after several seconds.

She slid into the darkness of the den, her pure silver pelt turning to black in the shadows. "Spottedrose has shared some important news with me," she mewed, "she says that Blizzardstar visited her in her dreams. She said he told her he would be returning to the forest soon."

Oakstar's eyes narrowed with interest. He leaned in closer to the medicine cat, his claws sliding out and sinking into the earthen floor. "Where has Blizzardstar been," he wondered out loud.

"He has been recovering in his clan. His injuries had been severe, it appears that his soul was trapped in Starclan," she mewed slowly. She was growing even more certain of what was happening to the IceClan leader as she pieced it all together.

"I saw Tinypool on the border a couple moons ago. She had said that Blizzardstar was stuck in some sort of sleep," Dewdrop meowed.

Oakstar hissed, turning his furious gaze to Dewdrop. "So you knew that he was alive! Just asleep in his camp! Why didn't you say anything when Hailstorm said he was dead?" Oakstar yowled angrily.

Dewdrop shrank back, flattening her ears against her head. "I didn't think he would be of any threat! Now that Spottedrose knows he is returning, she wants to take her kits back to IceClan," she meowed desperately.

Oakstar growled as he stood to leave the den. "I am taking our strongest warriors now, to go and wipe out their clan once and for all. If Blizzardstar is still asleep, it will be easy," he chuckled. He was starting to push through the den entrance but then he turned back to Dewdrop.

"Is Spottedrose fit to fight," he asked, clearly intending for the medicine cat to give him the answer he wanted.

"Yes, her kits will be fine here in camp with me," Dewdrop meowed.

Oakstar nodded and then quickly left the den.

Dewdrop sat in Oakstar's den for a long while after that. She listened to him round up his warriors. Spottedrose was hissing and growling as Oakstar pushed her from the nursery. The patrol left with no hesitation, almost all of the warriors had gone off to battle.

Finally, she left the den and padded back over to the nursery. She had almost forgotten that Foxstreak had joined the nursery overnight. Now that she was rounding with kits, she slept a lot of the day away.

Dewdrop quietly padded over to Spottedrose's nest, looking down at the tiny Pinekit and Frostkit nestled inside. She rested her tail around the brim of the mossy nest, watching the kits as they slept.

"With IceClan gone, we WILL live peaceful lives," Dewdrop whispered, "this is the way it is meant to be."

Chapter Twenty Four {Edited}

Spottedrose ran after the patrol obediently, flanked by Hailstorm and Snakefang. She knew that the pair were there to make sure she did not try to escape as they made their way to the IceClan camp.

Oh how foolish she felt, confiding in that evil medicine cat! She had acted like she cared, but truly she just wanted all of IceClan to die just like everyone else. "You're all as crazy as foxes," Spottedrose gasped as she struggled to keep up with the group.

"You seem more like the crazy one," Snakefang hissed in response. Hailstorm cast her a sad look as she continued running after the patrol. It left her feeling puzzled but she didn't have time to wonder why Hailstorm seemed upset.

She stayed silent the rest of the way, feeling her clan mate's anger like scorching heat in the air around her. The patrol did not dare to stop as they crossed the border.

"Assume attack positions," Oakstar called from the front of the patrol. Instantly, the group shifted into several smaller groups. Hailstorm and Snakefang stayed where they were, clearly only really there to keep an eye on Spottedrose.

Not a single IceClan patrol was out in the forest as Oakstar led his battle patrol straight towards their camp. In no time, they were all standing outside the IceClan camp entrance.

"We will charge straight into the camp! Take the elder's den first, then the nursery! The apprentices and warriors will surely join the fight; kill them all as quickly as you can," Oakstar yowled, letting his gaze travel over his patrol.

Each group nodded, yowling with excitement. This is it, Spottedrose thought sadly, Oakstar is going to wipe out all of IceClan and there's nothing I can do about it! With a loud caterwaul, Oakstar launched himself through the camp entrance.

Frantically, Spottedrose pushed herself through the camp barrier as her clanmates swarmed into the unsuspecting camp. As she crashed through the foliage into the camp, she watched in horror as Nightvolt, a gray tabby BreezeClan warrior, launched himself on top of Webstripe.

"No, please! Leave him alone," she wailed, as the whole clearing erupted in panic around her. In a flash, Nightvolt had Webstripe pinned to the ground and dug his fangs deep into his throat.

Spottedrose turned away quickly as Nightvolt let go of Webstripe's neck, letting his limp body collapse to the ground. She vaguely remembered Blizzardstar telling her about the day that he had named him a warrior. She could feel her stomach clenching with disgust.

Blood and fur already stained the ground all over, wreathing masses of battling cats covering the entire camp floor. "They're attacking the elders," a familiar voice yowled across the camp.

It was Wildflight; she was perched on a tall branch in a nearby tree. "Come down here and fight," a snowy white and silver tom hissed up at the deputy.

Spottedrose glanced behind her, noticing that Snakefang and Hailstorm were no longer guarding her. Quickly, she streaked away towards the elder's den.

The stench of blood reached her instantly, making her gag. As she neared, she noticed several bodies littered the ground infront of the elder's den.

Snakefang's body was closest, his chest still rising and falling rapidly with each breath. As she stepped over him, she noticed his belly was slashed open and blood was pouring out into the dirt below him. She couldn't imagine that this had happened to him in the short time that they had been fighting.

"Oh no! Starclan, how could you take Hawkslash and Timberstrike," an anguished wailing brought Spottedrose back to reality. She looked up and saw Reedfur, the elderly brown tabby tom.

His paws were muddy and coated in blood. "Snakefang just appeared... he ripped Hawkslash's throat out and then killed Timberstrike when he tried to stop him," his voice shook uncontrollably as he fought to keep his sanity.

"You need to run! Leave the camp! Run as far as you can," Spottedrose hissed, pushing Reedfur away with her shoulder. She looked down at Hawkslash's body as she stepped over him, feeling her stomach start to churn again.

Oh Starclan, do something to stop this slaughter, she thought desperately as she ushered Reedfur out a small hole in the camp barrier. The elder didn't stop for a second as he started to race away into the forest.
~~

"What's going on? I should be back there by now," Blizzardstar mewed angrily. He sat with Lilybloom in the Starclan clearing, gazing down into a puddle that had formed overnight.

"This puddle is here to show us an omen," Lilybloom meowed, clearly not feeling any rush for Blizzardstar to return home.

"Yes, yes. But surely it's Starclan cat's duty to read the omens. Why do you need me here," he wailed. He knew that the battle was already raging in the clearing he called home. His pelt was starting to spike with urgency the longer he sat with the starry furred medicine cat.

"There are things happening right now that can not be avoided," Lilybloom mewed gently. She dipped her paw into the puddle, letting the ripples obscure their vision. As the ripples dissapeared, a clear vision could be seen in the puddle's depths. "Is that Spottedrose," Blizzardstar meowed obtrusively as he leaned forward and squinted at the image.

"That is Spottedrose," Lilybloom meowed, watching the vision unfold in the water below.

"That looks like she is in my camp! And is that blood on her pelt? What is happening," Blizzardstar's voice was growing desperate.

"Just relax," Lilybloom whispered, "this is her destiny."

Blizzardstar clenched his jaws shut, watching as the vision continued in the puddle. He could see blurry images of slumped cats in the background, making his heart sick. He wished he could see more, to know what has happening in his beloved home.

"I need to leave," Blizzardstar meowed again. Lilybloom shook her head and wrapped her tail lightly over her paws.

"No, you need to unite our clans. You and Spottedrose do not share destinies," she meowed softly, "She is meant to bring an end to the violence. I am sorry."

Blizzardstar felt anger building in his limbs, he wished he could just close his eyes and open them back in his camp. But right now, his camp was being ravaged by the vengeful Oakstar.

My poor clanmates, he thought sadly, if you just hold on I will be there soon.

Chapter Twenty Five {Edited}

Spottedrose shot back around the camp barrier, sliding slightly from the slick blood on her paws. "I need to get as many of them out as I can," she gasped, out of breath, as she barreled through the thorns of the camp wall.

The shrieking and yowling had grown louder and more desperate. The Iceclan cats were battling for their lives. Spotting Brokenpaw hunched over outside the medicine den, Spottedrose quickly bounded over to her.

The apprentice hissed as she approached, turning away from a cat she was tending to on the ground. It was Stormsurge, his usual dark gray pelt turned crimson with spilt blood.

"It's just me," Spottedrose gasped as Brokenpaw slashed at her muzzle. The apprentice recoiled slightly, seeming to finally recognize Spottedrose.

"What are you doing here," Brokenpaw growled as she turned her attention back to Stormsurge. Weaseltail was poised a few pawsteps away, yowling at any BreezeClan warriors that got close.

"I am here to help your clanmates escape," she insisted, "I can not stand by and watch you all be killed."

Brokenpaw took a deep breath, "there has already been many deaths, for both sides," she whispered. Spottedrose could almost not hear her over the sound of battle. Brokenpaw waved her tail through the air, pointing it in the direction of the medicine den entrance.

Spottedrose's heart sank as her gaze fell upon their bodies, arranged in two rows to the side of the entrance. She couldn't distinguish the bodies of some since they were so horribly mangled and bloody. But her heart thudded in her chest as she looked over them all.

In the first row lay Webstripe, his throat gouged and bloody from Nightvolt's ambush at the start of the battle. Next lay Hawklash and Timberstrike, Goldensky and Softgaze. At the end of the line lay Quickwater, her blood not yet dry despite her quickly fading scent. Spottedrose remembered how kind and accepting the gray tabby had been when she first joined IceClan. She knew she would never forget her.

In the opposite line there was Snakefang, Coldwind, Vinestrike, and Bearclaw. Spottedrose's heart twisted as she laid her eyes on Bearclaw. She had wanted to train him well and to understand that battle was not always the answer. It looked as though she had failed that task.

"Well get a move on," Brokenpaw growled, shoving Spottedrose aside. She looked down at the apprentice, noticing her good eye was filled with fear and sorrow as she continued dressing Stormsurge's wounds.

"I will get as many out as I can," Spottedrose promised as she turned to race away into the battle. Brokenpaw stopped her, placing her paw on Spottedrose's tail tip.

"Tinypool and Wildflight are protecting Blizzardstar in the medicine den. I'm not sure who is still standing out there, but we need to keep them away from the medicine den," she mewed urgently.

Spottedrose looked up at the massive split rock, wishing with all of her heart that she could be in there with Blizzardstar. But she had a more important duty now, she had to get the surviving IceClan warriors out.

"You two need to leave too," Spottedrose meowed as she turned to leave again. "Reedfur is out there somewhere, I'll send the others in his direction."

Brokenpaw hung her head, pressing her bloodied paws against Stormsurge's flank. "I can't leave him here," she whispered.

"Yes you can," Weaseltail growled as he stepped over and nudged Brokenpaw away. "I will take her to Reedfur," he meowed to

Spottedrose, "just make sure Blizzardstar is safe."

She dipped her head, glad for the tom's help. Brokenpaw wailed in distress as Weaseltail grabbed her scruff and hauled her away through the camp barrier, adding another large hole along with the countless others.

"Blizzardstar!" Spottedrose jumped as Oakstar yowled across the camp. He was standing in the middle of the camp, casting his gaze across the dens. While she was speaking with Brokenpaw, the commotion had ceased. Most of the warriors were dead or dying while the rest had collapsed into bloody heaps on the ground.

"Blizzardstar! I have come to take my revenge and wipe out your sorry clan once and for all," he yowled, prowling forward slowly.

His eyes locked onto Spottedrose as she turned away from the medicine den. "Is he in there?" he rasped, his long curved claws sinking into the grass with each step.

"You won't accomplish anything by wiping IceClan out," Spottedrose meowed loudly, "they will always live on, in Frostkit and Pinekit!"

Oakstar's eyes narrowed to tiny slits, a fierce growl rumbling in his throat. In a flash, Oakstar was bounding forward towards the medicine den. Spottedrose fought to stay in his way but he pushed her aside with ease and shot into the den.

Immediately, yowling and hissing sounded with Oakstar's intrusion. Spottedrose slid in as quickly as she could, hoping that she wasn't too late.

But as she entered the den, she was stopped with pure terror. Oakstar had Tinypool's neck in his jaws, blood was gushing from his mouth as he stood there staring at Blizzardstar.

Wildflight was standing protectively over her leader, her fur bushed up to almost three times her size. "Oakstar you have no honor! To ruthlessly kill a medicine cat!" Wildflight yowled, her voice shaking with fear.

"I will kill all of you," he rasped as he opened his mouth and let

Tinypool drop to the ground. He started to inch closer to Blizzardstar and Wildflight, pawstep by pawstep. His eyes were dancing with madness, his jaws dripping with Tinypool's blood.

Spottedrose felt like her paws were blocks of ice, too cold and heavy to move. But as Oakstar reared back on his hind paws, she felt energy course through her pelt once more.

With a gigantic leap, she threw herself onto Oakstar's back, digging her claws into his shoulders. The massive tom twisted, yowling with pain as Spottedrose raked her claws down his back.

He flung her off effortlessly and he whirled to face her, his eyes dark and his teeth bared. She felt her heart flutter in her chest for a moment before he struck.

In the blink of an eye, Oakstar had dove forward and tackled Spottedrose to the ground. He started to claw at her pelt, shredding her fur and spraying blood across the den.

Without even a moment's hesitation, he sank his fangs into her chest. Despite what was happening, Spottedrose did not cry out or make a noise. Wildflight was calling out frantically next to Blizzardstar.

"No! Spottedrose! You need to fight back!" she shrieked, watching as Oakstar continued to bite her all over. His large fangs left deep punctures in her delicate skin, blood welling up and dripping down her fur.

After a few more agonizing seconds, Wildflight took a step away from Blizzardstar's body. She dared to step closer to Oakstar, peeking over his shoulder at Spottedrose's lifeless body on the ground.

"You've killed her," Wildflight gasped, her eyes round. Oakstar didn't move; he was sitting over Spottedrose's body, his expression blank.

"I will kill whoever it takes to rule this forest," he whispered, barely loud enough for Wildflight to hear him.

But she knew she had to end it, quickly, before Oakstar came to his senses once more. In a fluid motion, Wildflight slid behind Oakstar and gripped his scruff in her teeth.

Before he could retaliate, she reached her paws forward and dug her claws into his chest. His breath gurgled in his throat as she pulled her claws up and across his neck. She could feel his warm blood flowing around her claws, as she let go of him and let his body slump to the ground.
~

"I can't wait any longer, I need to go back now," Blizzardstar wailed as he paced across the clearing.

Lilybloom and Snowpuddle were sitting together, their gazes emotionless as they watched Blizzardstar pace.

"Yes, I suppose it is time for you to return," Lilybloom mewed after several more moments.

Blizzardstar bounded over to them, eager to go back to his clanmates. "Now, go lay next to the puddle and close your eyes," Lilybloom instructed him.

Without any objection, he bounded over to the vision puddle and lay beside it. He closed his eyes and started to think about how wonderful it would be to see his clanmates again, when suddenly the sharp tang of blood filled the air.

He opened his eyes to see Wildflight a few paces away. "Wildflight," he croaked, his voice was shrill and dry from being asleep so long.

He tried to stand but his muscles were far too weak to support him. Wildflight turned around and stared in astonishment at her leader.

"Blizzardstar, you've finally returned," she meowed, her voice tense.

Polarstar could scent so many unfamiliar things, he wasn't quite sure what was going on. "Is that Oakstar I smell? Why was he here," he asked curiously.

"Oakstar is right here," Wildflight mewed, taking a step back from the BreezeClan leader's body.

"He came to wipe us all out," Wildflight meowed, "I had to kill him, or else he would have surely killed you." She turned away from Oakstar's body and padded back to Blizzardstar's side.

He sighed, feeling responsibility weigh down on his shoulders once more. In his eagerness to return, he had forgotten that a bloody battle was unfolding in the IceClan camp. "How many of our clanmates have been wounded," he asked.

"There have been many deaths," Wildflight meowed sadly. Blizzardstar felt his heart start to beat faster in his chest, "deaths," he echoed.

"Yes, and I'm sorry to say... but Spottedrose attacked Oakstar when he entered the den. He was so overcome with anger... he killed her," Wildflight choked out the words.

Blizzardstar lay his head back on the ground, not quite sure what he should say or do at this moment. "Is she here, in the den," he asked, his voice crackling with sorrow.

"Yes," Wildflight meowed. She padded over to the calico's body and picked her up gently. She slowly carried her to Blizzardstar's side and lay her down, making sure their pelts were touching. Blood was still pouring from the wounds all over her body.

"Are Frostkit and Pinekit here," Blizzardstar whispered, his voice growing weaker and weaker.

"There are no kits in the camp," Wildflight murmured, brushing her tail over Spottedrose's fur. She looked over at Tinypool's body, uncomfortably aware at the sheer amount of death she had to face outside the medicine den.

Blizzardstar lay in silence next to Spottedrose for many hours, not moving or making a noise. Wildflight was slowly bringing order back to the camp while he grieved. He wasn't aware of what time of day it was, or how many days may have passed. All he could

think was that he was too late. His destiny with Spottedrose was just a fantasy, now.

Chapter Twenty Six {Edited}

It took a long time for IceClan to recover after that bloody battle. Wildflight was tasked with searching the forest for her clanmates who had fled. Quietstorm and her kits, Applepaw and Sweetpaw, had escaped very early in the battle; they had taken shelter in a spiky thorn bush near the far side of their border.

Brokenpaw and Weaseltail were hiding near a frozen stream outside the territory. The medicine cat was frantic, claiming to have been following Reedfur's scent; but, the elder was nowhere to be found.

After Brokenpaw returned and tended to the wounded, Hailstorm stepped forward as the BreezeClan leader. "Blizzardstar, I am deeply sorry for this unjust attack," he began, shuffling his massive silver paws.

Blizzardstar was sitting a few paces away, watching as his deceased clan mates were lain out on the grass before him. "I can not blame you for this," Blizzardstar murmured. He was passed the point of feeling anger or vengeance, all he wanted was for BreezeClan to bring his kits back to him.

"Many of our warriors have perished, I fear that BreezeClan will die out if we return to the hillside on our own," Hailstorm continued, "If you are truly our herald of peace, I beg you to please take in my clanmates."

Blizzardstar stared at the BreezeClan deputy, shock showing clear across his face. "But your clan has conquered the hills for generations! What would Starclan say, to see you abandon your home," he mewed, bewildered.

"Starclan knew you would save the forest. If they were confident enough to put their faith in you, then so are the rest of BreezeClan. Together, we will rule this forest," Hailstorm meowed, hoping that Blizzardstar agreed with him.

"Fine," he sighed, "but I want my kits brought back to this camp immediately." He knew he would only truly accept them as long as his kits were unharmed.

Hailstorm nodded quickly, "I have already sent out a warrior to fetch Foxstreak and Dewdrop. They were to watch over the kits, while we were away."

Blizzardstar waited patiently at the entrance for their arrival, actually feeling somewhat happy at the thought of seeing his kits. When the tiny patrol returned, Foxstreak padded cautiously through the entrance with Frostkit clenched firmly in her jaws.

Hailstorm padded up behind Blizzardstar, his tone calm yet authoritative, "Foxstreak, this is our home now. Blizzardstar will escort you to the nursery and explain to you what has happened.

She placed Frostkit gently on the ground before speaking to Hailstorm. "But Coldwind," Foxstreak mewed desperately, "did he survive the battle?"

Hailstorm shook his head sadly. "No, your mate is with Starclan now," he meowed softly. Ashcloud stepped from the behind the queen, carrying Pinekit in his mouth.

"This is what Oakstar's madness has done to us," Foxstreak sobbed, crumpling to the ground. Frostkit squeaked in surprise as she slumped down beside her.

"Let me get you to the nursery," Blizzardstar meowed, trying to sound as soothing as possible. It was hard when he was feeling just the same as she was.

Hailstorm grunted in surprise as he peered around Ashcloud through the camp entrance. "Isn't Dewdrop with you," he asked.

"No, she wasn't in the camp when I returned," Ashcloud meowed, "I followed her scent to our farthest border but I could not find her."

Blizzardstar wasn't exactly paying attention, he was trying to get Foxstreak to her paws. As soon as the queen stood, he picked up Frostkit by the scruff.

"Follow me," he mewed as he led Foxstreak and Ashcloud to the nursery. The queen eagerly slid inside, quickly taking the biggest, softest nest in the corner. Ashcloud set down Pinekit in the nest next to her and left, clearly not wanting to stick around in the nursery for long.

"I'm sorry about Coldwind," Blizzardstar mewed softly as he turned to leave. He looked back at the orange she-cat, noticing that her eyes were still swamped with sorrow for her mate.

"I'll be ok," she murmured, "Spottedrose will be able to help me care for my kits."

Blizzardstar's heart thudded harder in his chest, making him feel like he was going to pass out. "Spottedrose is also in Starclan," he whispered, feeling depression sweep over him again.

Foxstreak whimpered softly, drawing her tail around Frostkit and Pinekit. "Was it truly that horrible," she asked, her voice shaking like a leaf caught in the breeze.

"Yes, but things will get better now," he promised. His energy was quickly spent as he spoke with Hailstorm. He took one long, last look at Frostkit and Pinekit before ducking his head and leaving the den. Yes, things will get better now. Spottedrose had sacrificed herself to save them, but he knew he could never shake this feeling of helplessness. Lilybloom had said this was her destiny. And I must unite the forest, he reminded himself.

The forest will be a calmer, safer place for our kin to live, he thought to himself. He knew he should be feeling relief, but the depression he felt over Spottedrose would not fade for a very long time.

Epilogue {Edited}

Seven moons later, Blizzardstar was tasked with a journey he had not taken since he was made the new leader of IceClan. On this day, he knew that he must accompany Brokenpaw to the Fire Stone. It had been many seasons since Blizzardstar had visited the shrine and received his nine lives, he almost forgot how to get there.

"I think I see the cavern," he meowed loudly behind him, hoping that Brokenpaw could hear. A massive snow storm was descending on the mountain, making it near impossible to see or hear anything more that a mouse length away.

"Just hurry, my pelt is going to freeze off," Brokenpaw yowled as she clawed her way up the icy rocks behind him. As they neared the cavern, the snow started to turn into hail, pelting them as they took the last few pawsteps into the shelter.

"Thank Starclan! I thought we would freeze out there," Brokenpaw gasped, her black and brown pelt slicked back with water and clumps of snow.

"You know, I bet Tinypool would be so proud to see you now," Blizzardstar meowed, gazing at Brokenpaw fondly.

"Yeah, Tinypool was an amazing teacher. I just wish she hadn't joined Starclan so soon, there was still much for me to learn," Brokenpaw mewed sadly.

"But you had enough sense to figure out what she didn't teach you, and that's what matters. Our clan depends on your skills," Blizzardstar meowed, hoping to cheer the apprentice up.

"Yeah you're right! Well, let's get this going," she purred, trotting over to the massive opal vein sticking from the cave wall.

The iridescent stone glittered with streaks of red and orange, some splatters of blue and green swimming underneath. "It truly is beautiful," Brokenpaw breathed, awe sparkling in her good eye.

"You need to lay next to it and close your eyes," Blizzardstar instructed, coming to stand next to Brokenpaw at the foot of the magnificent gem.

"Here it goes," she mewed as she tucked her paws underneath her and touched her nose to the stone. In an instant, she closed her eyes and drifted into sleep.

Blizzardstar quickly lay down next to her and touched the stone, feeling sleep pull him into the world of Starclan. When he opened his eyes, he was in the brightly lit clearing with Brokenpaw beside him.

"Welcome," a loud voice called, echoing through the trees around them. A large circle of cats surrounded them, many that were unfamiliar to both of them.

As Blizzardstar scanned the sea of pelts for a familiar face, Tinypool trotted forward to greet them. "Welcome to Starclan! These are your fellow medicine cats, they have helped heal out clanmates since the very first cat came to live in the forest." She swept her tail behind her, indicating the numerous cats sitting behind her.

"We have called you both here today to give Brokenpaw her medicine cat name," Tinypool began slowly. She looked over at Blizzardstar, noticing that he was still looking through the crowd distractedly.

"Pay attention," she snapped, whipping Blizzardstar's side with her tail, "this ceremony is very important!"

Blizzardsar chuckled, sitting back on his haunches. He let his gaze focus back on Tinypool once more. "You're still as bossy as ever," he purred.

"We are here today to give Brokenpaw her full medicine cat name," Tinypool growled, repeating herself. "She has trained hard to understand the ways of a medicine cat, she will heal IceClan efficiently and in accordance to Starclan's will."

Brokenpaw was wriggling with excitement, a purr rising in her throat. "From this day forward, she will be known as Brokensong! We commend your patience and the conviction to do what is truly right."

All of the assembled cats started to yowl happily, "Brokensong! Brokensong!"

Tinypool was beaming with pleasure as she touched noses with Brokensong. "I'm happy that Starclan chose for our paths to cross," Brokenpaw meowed, sadness thick in her voice.

"I will still walk with you for many seasons in your dreams, this is not goodbye," Tinypool purred, brushing her silver tail across Brokensong's flank.

Blizzardstar's heart warmed at the exchange but he had turned his attention back to the crowd of cats. Then he saw her; he felt like his blood turned to ice in his veins.

He bounded away from Brokensong's side, straight towards Spottedrose. Her calico pelt was clean and sparkling with starlight, her eyes glowed with love as she met Blizzardstar's gaze.

"I never thought I'd see you again," he gasped as he came to stand before her. She giggled lightly, her voice sweet as honey in his ears.

"Of course I will always be with you. I will walk these skies for many generations, watching over our kin," she purred.

"But the darkness? It has gone now, hasn't it," he asked. His thoughts turned to Frostkit and Pinekit, both old enough to become apprentices in the next few days.

"Yes, the darkness has gone. But with a new era, a new darkness is forming," she meowed softly.

Blizzardstar glanced back at Brokensong and Tinypool, their heart felt meeting coming to an end. He noticed in shock that the cats around him were slowly starting to vanish into the air.

"Wait! A new darkness," he meowed desperately, "I thought our clan was safe now that we can live in peace!"

"Your clan will live in peace; but this forest has been bathed in blood for too long. On the night that the sun will cast its shadow, a new evil will come to taint the forest. It is deadly and is as elusive as the shadows, it could destroy your whole clan in a matter of days. IceClan will need to leave the forest if it is to survive," Spottedrose's eyes were fixed on Blizzardstar intently as her body continued to fade.

"We will have to leave the forest," he muttered, looking down at his paws, "but I can't bear to make my clan leave our home."

"You will not have to. Just live your life, and be a great father for Frostkit and Pinekit," she purred as her body finally shifted and dissapeared from sight.

Blizzardstar blinked to find himself waking next to Brokensong in the Firestone cavern. "Quick, we need to return back home," Blizzardstar meowed as he stood and started to pad to the entrance. Speaking to Spottedrose about their kits had left him eager to return to camp and see them once more.

Brokensong followed obediently, staying silent as she trailed along behind him. Whatever the future had in store for IceClan, Blizzardstar was sure that he could raise his kits in peace.

Copyright

Just adding copyrights to all my stories (;

Copyright
2016 © Wikidclown
All Rights Reserved